People's Democratic & Popular Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research

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Delineating Life Stories through Embedded Narratives & Polyphony: An Aesthetic Sailing into Elif Shafak's The Forty Rules of Love

Thesis Submitted to the Department of English for the Fulfillment & the Requirement of the Degree of Doctorate in Literature

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“Always be a poet, even in prose”

-Charles Baudelaire-

Dedications

To

My reason to live, my beloved parents

The apples of my eyes, my little brothers

The amazing sister that I have

Her (Our) little angels Ilef and Noureddine

Hichem, my brother-in-law

The generous-hearted Mayouta

&

To the loved ones

Still around

or

Under the ground ..

Thank you for bestowing me with unconditional love, abundant support, and sincere prayers,

This thesis is lovingly and wholeheartedly dedicated to all of you !

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, praise to almighty Allah, He whose guidance I felt in every step I took along this academic journey,

"My success is not but through Allah. Upon Him I have relied, and to Him I return"

(Surah Hud, Aya 88, Quran)

Then,

With love, respect, and immense gratitude, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Nabila NAIMI for accompanying me throughout the fulfilment of this research. Words fail to describe the great and inspiring person that you are .. Undying thanks to you, madam!

Equally, I would like to express my sincerest acknowledgements to the unique and impossible to be forgotten, Dr. Faiza BOUKHELEF. To your constant help, I am forever indebted!

Acknowledgments are extended to the respected jury members, namely: Dr. Amina Babou, Prof. Mohammed Dib, Prof. Hanaa Berrezoug, and Dr. Samir Arab. Thank you abundantly for devoting efforts and for dedicating spaces into your busy schedules for this humble work to be evaluated.

Finally, heartfelt thanks to all my friends in and out of academia, Dr. Khadija BENKHADDOUR, my uncle Ahmed, my aunt Rakia.

And again,

To love and happiness, incarnated,

Mom and Dad

Thank you for always having my back,

Being your daughter is a real pride !

Abstract

Considered as a historiographic metafictional work, *The Forty Rules of Love (2010)* by Elif Shafak stands as a window throughout which history can be glanced at, from an imaginary side. Through the employment of embedded narratives, a multi-directional shuttling between historical biographies and realities, and metafictional stories, have been made. These stories drifted apart in time and place, but they coalesced in context, i.e. human life, and the human condition. In other words, Shafak's bestseller plunges into life stories through the use of disrupted and nested narrative techniques. The narrative layers unveiled that the thirteenth century and the twenty-first one share common maladies resulting from political turmoil, religious crises, and social unrest. In times like these, East and West, diagnoses end up questing for similar remedies for collective symptoms of alienation, dualities and existential crises that people suffer from. Past and present, Neoplatonic love and taking a leap of faith are believed to be the principal elements in the curing recipe. Withal, the narrative was unfolded through multiple voicing, offering equal chances for characters to unfold what the story holds in its pleats, based on their individual engagements in it and what appeared to them from the angle they occupied. This narrative democracy was employed by Elif for the purpose of stitching cultural ruptures with the thread of New Sufism, an ideology that came to existence to 'universalize' Islam and to pave its way up to the West, utilizing Rumi's (mis)translated works as an instrument. By and large, the Turkish writer's narrative thrived at penetrating the Western literary market and proved to be capable of wavering out of the Oriental cocoon; Nevertheless, doing so, a resulting internal binarism was created, splitting the Sufi minority from the non-Sufi majority, inside of the same social platform. Through the postmodern loop, using Bakhtin's theories on polyvocality, Kierkegaard's religious existentialism, and multi-layered tellability approaches, this thesis aims at unfolding the mysteries of the juxtaposed life stories being laid down in *The Forty Rules of Love* out of motivation for measuring the capability of globalization to blur what is local. For this, an aesthetic qualitative in-depth data analysis is going to be conducted, based on Jung and Sinclair's definitions and project on modern Muslim subjectivities, to locate the contributions of Shafak's work to the Rumi phenomenon. Eventually, conclusive results would unveil the aforementioned narrative's successes and flaws regarding universalism, narrative vocal democracy, and intra-faith pluralism.

Keywords: *Embedded Narratives, Love, (New) Sufism, Polyphony, Rumi.*

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

General introduction

Following the life-cycle of butterflies, postmodern novels, like silkworms, took place inside the literary cocoon where they received nourishment, grew wings, had new lineaments and advanced features which enabled them to develop, enlarge their reach, and enhance their capability of fluttering high in the distant skies of literature. Hence, the postmodern epoch served the role of a womb which bore real and imaginary stories and presented them through a number of devices and techniques, amongst which were those which brought the contemporary readers back to reading history by the presentation of historical and cultural facts and figures through 'metafiction', creating what is called 'historiographic metafiction'. This postmodern literary genre tends to speak to history, politics and humanity through the language of fiction using intertextuality as a main linking medium to connect stories which are, mostly, fragmented considering time and shattered in terms of places.

The Forty Rules of Love (2010), an example of historiographic metafiction written by Elif Shafak, a Turkish writer, is a novel which unleashed real facts and figures from history onto a fictional platform, and made them interact with imaginary characters and, even more, it involved them in fictional tasks. The historical incidents in the novel were unfolded throughout the pleats of a book read by a first-stratum imaginary character, therefore, the work was self-reflexive to its fictionality, the thing that confirms its nature as a historiographic metafictional creation.

In her book, Elif Shafak tells the story of Ella Rubinstein, a forty years old woman, traditional and desperate, whose husband urges her to start a career for a literary agency. As part of her tasks for the new job as a book critic, Mrs. Rubinstein reads "Sweet Blasphemy", a book by an unknown Sufi author named Aziz Zahara. The latter's novel narrates, from various perspectives, Rumi's journey towards becoming a Sufi poet, under the supervision of his spiritual master and companion, Shams of Tabriz. Along that journey, Elif sets historical facts,

political ideologies, and cultural beliefs, giving insights about Sufism and love, and touching upon issues like universalism, social binarism, tolerance and religious fanaticism. The story turned to be life-changing for Mrs. Rubinstein as well. In this regard, the Orient is utilized as a teaching tool to help the domestic Western female protagonist of the main story to go into a huge spiritual transformation. Therefore, between the twenty-first-century Massachusetts, and the thirteenth-century Orient, stories are woven and mingled By Shafak, giving birth to numerous wisdoms, and using various postmodern narrative techniques, postmodern embedding, forbye polyphony.

Across intertwined layers, and through different perspectives, Shafak takes readers into an aesthetic journey of spirituality and self-actualization (Nasr, 2021). Plunging into the companionship story of Rumi and Shams of Tabriz, and that which arose between Ella and Aziz, the Turkish writer sails into the mysteries of Sufism, a religion recognized among its adherents by the faith of peace and love (Zain et al., 2018). She, first, presents the previously mentioned ideology as an alternative version of Islam (Sherwani, 2020). Then, she pointed out to the pillars over which Sufism stands, through forty maxims that have been laid down through the binomial life stories that, actually, reflected each other's journey towards realizing the meaning of existence and purpose of life. Present-time tales, in this vein, mirrored past-time stories, and the past was instrumental in teaching those who live in the present.

Little work tackled *The Forty Rules of Love*, due to its young age. The majority of the already conducted research upon it came only in form of journal and web-articles. Nevertheless, the novel increasingly keeps evoking interest among scholars, for it touches upon issues that have always been considered as bones of contention, and for its richness with a myriad of aesthetic and stylistic devices besides literary elements. Historiography, metafiction, intertextuality, Orientalism and cosmopolitanism, feminism, and existentialism are all things that have been analyzed separately in different papers and journal articles.

General introduction

The present research has aesthetic concerns in initially locating Shafak's narrative in The Rumi (or Sufi) Phenemenon. For this, it intends to situate the nature of the inserted literary, biographical and historical Sufi elements. Also, the narrative structure is scrutinized with regard to its relationship and reflection of postmodernism on the one hand, and with consideration to its realization of universalism and democracy in construction and context. Such analysis is going to be conducted with the ultimate aim of measuring the capability of postmodern techniques to revive interest in history, the extent to which linguistic and religious domestication can boost the universality of literary works, and the capability of embedding and polyvocality not only to draw the full picture of events but also to evoke empathy with unconventional characters and deeds.

In this regard, among the most relevant questions that this research intends to answer are:

1. Did the aesthetic stream that Elif took in (re)-defining Sufism and Islam thrive in making Rumi, the Islamic ideology, and the work as a whole, universal?

2. How did the postmodern, multi-layered, and poly-faceted narratology contribute to the aesthetic depiction of notions, ideologies and life stories? Did they serve providing a detailed and striking narratology as well as achieving democracy in structure and context?

Possible hypotheses in this vein would be as follows:

1. Shafak's Westernized version of Sufism and her domestication of Islam did pave the way for her seminal work to succeed in going universal. However, that same version created ideological ruptures at the internal level.

2. Polyvocality along with other postmodern features created a democratic narrative where the different voices had equal chances to express themselves. This enabled voicing multiple ideologies, arguing about different notions, as well as projecting light upon several facets

from characters' life stories, the thing that collaborated in the creation of a strikingly detailed narrative.

To fulfill the research aims, this work is going to be divided into three chapters, where the first and second would be instrumental for the analysis and results that the third would unveil. Chapter one would provide historical information about Rumi, his life and death, as well as his circle. Then, the research would move to explain Sufism in its original and eclectic versions, pointing out to its relationship with Islam. For a better comprehension of that, Rumi and some of his translated works are going to be provided to put to the fore 'The Rumi Phenomenon' which has a strong bond with the New-Sufi ideology. Also, a group of translators is going to be introduced with regard to their translating inclinations when transferring the literary creations of the aforementioned Sufi poet. The selected group of translators were actually all sources that Elif claimed to have relied upon for the fulfilment of her work, and thus, knowing about their versions' (un)faithfulness and (un)conformity would allow coming up with a conclusion regarding the nature and ideological leanings of *The Forty Rules of Love* as well.

The second chapter is going to be divided into two sections. In fact, both parts are going to go over postmodern narratological features and theories. Nevertheless, the first section would provide the major lineaments that were introduced and reshaped during the postmodern age, influencing both characters' delineation, their inner realms, the settings surrounding them, reaching out narration and its welcoming of historiographic metafiction as a postmodern new-born. The second part, however, would move straightly to shedding light upon postmodern tellability. First, the technique of embedding along with its components and functions are going to be explained. Then, ditto, Bakhtinian theories on multiplicity of voices would also be defined and scrutinized. Consequently, polyphony-related conceptions like heteroglossia, dialogism, and polyphonic dialogism are going to be dug into.

Following that, the third chapter would apply all the previously explained postmodern notions and instruments to analyze *The Forty Rules of Love*, and to allow answering the research questions above. Initially, an abridgement of the narrative layers is going to be provided. Then, a biographic presentation of Rumi, Shams and their circle is going to be laid the way Elif chose to introduce them. This would allow finding the realities and the fictional additions and modifications that the metafictional novel included. After that, Rumi's insertion in Shafak's narrative would be put under the spot. The poetical versions as well as the Sufi ideology being employed there are going to be analyzed. Ideological deconstruction, religious relativism, pastiche, alienation, time disruption, cosmopolitanism, love, universalism, modern culture of hyperreality, media and technology, feminism and social dualism, intertextuality and historiographic-metafictional traces are all going to be spotted and tackled. Eventually, embedding and polyvocal policies in *The Forty Rules of Love* are going to be sketched. Their efficiency and democratic ability are going to be measured as well.

Finally, by the end of this thesis, the researcher intends to manage attaining three major goals. First, scanning the narrative location and narratological components of *The Forty Rules of Love*. Then, analyzing their organization and classification of the ideological mindset of the work as well as their role in influencing the reception of the content. Last but not least, the writer of this research wishes to draw attention to the efficiency of such narratology that Elif employed in asserting that reality is multi-sided in nature, history-related descriptions are open to interpretations, and that on the road towards universalism, localism might witness a breakdown. For such matters, postmodern weaving features would be touched upon. Emphases in this regard are going to be upon embedding, multiplicity of voices, alongside with other elements. Also, the aesthetics of the novel would be measured based on a comparative study that is intended to be conducted to uncover what the filter would keep when sieving the Sufi versions that Elif's seminal work chested.

As a referencing style, the present research is going to be conducted using the new seventh edition of the American Psychological Association (APA).

Chapter One

The Rumi Phenomenon: Re-Inscribing New Age Spirituality into Islam

Contents

"The tides will take my poetry and song,
And carry off the clothes I did not own
Good and bad, devotion, empty piety
Moonlight brings and moonlight takes away"

-Rumi-

(Translation of Zara Houshmand)

1.1. Introduction

Drifting into Shafak's story acquaints the reader with fictional and non-fictional characters. The latter play the role of guides, teachers, or even saints whose wisdom allures those whose insights come across such characters' axioms. For this paramount role, choice fell upon Jalal-Din Rumi and Shams of Tabriz to pick up Ella from under the rubbles of depression towards the orchard of love. Rumi and Shams are recognized characters from history, extolled and well-respected. By and large, this estimation was more profound among the Orient's Sufis, for the previously mentioned two are known as Sufi gurus. In America and the West, however, such estimation was incarnated through 'The Rumi Phenomenon' which caught both writers' interest and readers' fascination there. This 'phenomenon' is known for being a literary, spiritual, and philosophical movement supporting the creations of the so-called Rumi. Nevertheless, it implicitly served as an advertisement to an Islamic ideology, domesticated and falsified.

Verily, the birth of 'The Rumi Phenomenon' was a foregone result regarding the general atmosphere where it grew. Its propagation among readers outside the Oriental realm was logical regarding the profuse number of works which have been released for the matter's service, most of which are translations of the gurus' writings into English. In fact, those translations received a weighty criticism due to their unsafe carriage of original meanings.

Opponents accused Western translators for 'Westernizing' Rumi as well as de-Islamising him; while proponents defended those versions for 'universalizing' him.

Founding her own version based on both leagues, Elif presented the exceptional story of a lifetime companionship adding the flavour of Imagination. The present chapter intends to unfold Rumi's life, delve into the phenomenon he became in the West, unveil the ideology that his (translated) works held, and make clear the possible reasons and the way that led it glitter in the American literary arena. Then, it moves to explore and compare the different elements that 'benefitted' the Turkish writer, and were of aid to her, to come up with the version she laid in *The Forty Rules of Love.*

1.2. Rumi: A Sufi Guru … And an 'Avatar of Love'

September the thirtieth of the first septennial in the thirteenth century Tajikistan, formerly labelled as Balkh, a province situated in Khorassan, now known as Afghanistan, was marked by the birth of the would-be phenomenon in the Sufi culture and universal literature, Jalal-Din Muḥammad bin Muhammad al-Balkhi al-Qunuwi (Helminski, 2005), also known as Rumi, the mystic, the poet, and 'the avatar of love' (Zekrgoo & Tajer, 2020). In a city called Vakhs (Thomas et al., 2012), the latter came as an outcome of the marriage of Mumina Khatun and Baha-ul-Din Walad (Ashfaq, 2022). Actually, biographical accounts on Jalal did not delve into the life of the poet's mother although she had a kinship with the king of Khorasan (Shiva, 2018). Nevertheless, the majority of them centred their attention over Rumi's father.

1.2.1. Like Father, Like Son !

Baha-ul-Din Walad (1152–1231), Jalal's father, was a famous figure at the time. Descending from a Sufi Family, he was known for grasping esoteric and exoteric tools of knowledge, the thing that enabled him to be a public religious teacher, and a spiritual preacher in charge of a group of Sufi disciples. Besides that, Baha-ul-Din was a jurist and an author

(Chittick, 1983). He is the writer of *Maarif,* or *Divine Sciences,* which Coleman Barks and John Moyne defined as:

> A collection of visionary insights, questions and responses, conversations with God, commentary on passages from the Qur'an, stories, bits of poetry, sudden revelations, medicinal advice, gardening hints, dream records, jokes, erotic episodes, and speculation of many kinds (2005, p. XI).

Inside of this book, the author laid a good deal of his beliefs on Sufism (Thomas et al., 2012). Also, in the same work, he firmly defended Islamic principles and revelations. Verily, it was *Maarif* which influenced Jalal-Din the most, and therefore, it was his doorway into mysticism (Chittick, 1983).

By the arrival of the Mangols to Balkh (1221), Rumi's family lived a nomadic life moving from one place to another; From Nishapur, Baghdad and Kufa to Mecca for pilgrimage; from the now known Saudi Arabia to Damascus, and from Maltaya, Aqshahr and Karaman – archaically known as Larende- to Konia (in today's Turkey) where they finally settled in 1229 (Thomas et al., 2012). In Nishapur, Baha-ul-Din Walad met Farid-ul-Din Al-Attar (1142-1221), a Sufi master who provided him with *Asrarnamah, or The Book of Mysteries,* also known as *Book of Secrets,* a compilation of poems in which the Iranian *sheykh* laid a number of Sufi notions (Bashiri, 2002). During the same visit, Attar noticed Jalal's wittiness, and expressed his fascination with Baha-ul-Din's son. In fact, according to a number of biographical accounts, that Sufi saint of Neshapur had a great influence on Rumi (Schimmel, 2021). In Aqshahr, Baha-ul-Din worked as a law teacher and a Sunni preacher. In Larende, their following destination, the most prominent event in the life of the Sufi family was the marriage of Rumi (Thomas et al., 2012).

In Konia, Rumi's father was recognized as one of Konia's most famous scholars. By then, he was nick-named "*Sultan al-ulama*, the Sultan of the men of knowledge" (Chittick,

1983, p. 02). In 1231, Baha-ul-Din passed away. His funeral was held along a period of seven days, and it was attended by a large number of mourners (Thomas et al., 2012).

Much of Rumi's wisdom, as well as his spiritual, literary, and artistic creations, came as an outcome of being both the son and the friend of Baha-ul-Din the father (Barks & Moyne, 2005). Furthermore, two encounters are believed to have been life-changing and mind-enriching to Rumi. In the first one, Jalal met Shams of Tabriz, a companion that would switch the literary direction that he long sticked to, in terms of themes and forms. Then, Rumi encountered Salah Din Zarkub, a goldsmith that he befriended after Shams' disappearance. This companionship, however, did not last for so long due to Salah's death soon after he befriended the Sufi poet. By the wake of the latter's death, Husam Din Chalabi, a former Sufi disciple, became Rumi's friend (Kaynat, n.d.).

Forsooth, although they have never met, a wide legion of scholars reckon that there is an intersection between the influence that Baha-ul-Din had over his son and that which Shams had over his beloved companion. This might be due to the similar beliefs that both of the formerly mentioned mystics held. In this vein, Barks and Moyne said:

> There's a powerful intersection of Shams and Bahauddin in Rumi's transformation, though they never actually knew each other. Bahauddin dies (1231) before Shams and Rumi meet (1244). Both are passionate, daringly original mystics. They talk intimately and sensually of friendship with the divine. Neither is a poet, but Bahauddin carves out what Anne-marie Schimmel calls "great glowing, awe-inspiring boulders of Persian prose, passages whose bizarre sensual imagery express his intense love of God," (Chittick, 2004), and Shams drives a fierce, confronting, jocular back-and-forth through his discourses They both passionately long for more intimate and essential motion within the presence (2005, p. xii).

1.2.2. A Literary and Spiritual Legacy

Following his ancestor's footsteps, and by the death of Baha-ul-Din Walad, Jalal carried the torch of spiritual guidance that he inherited from his father and started his journey as a Sufi master (Azadibouga & Patton, 2015). At the age of twenty-four, he started the venture of

teaching literary, religious and theological studies in the same *madrasa* in which his father used to teach (Thomas et al., 2012). Overall, Andrew Harvey claimed that Rumi passed away, "leaving behind him, as a testimony to a life lived on the wildest and greatest heights of the spirit, the *Mathnawi*, a mystical epic in six volumes; the *Divan-i-Kabir*, a collection of thirty-five hundred odes and two thousand quatrains; a book of discourses; and several volumes of letters" (Helminski, 2005, p. ix).

In other words, Rumi left a spiritual legacy that continued drifting in the literary arenas of the different civilizations through time. In terms of poetry, the six segments of *Mathnawi* collection formed a work through which Jalal addressed the whole world using the language of spirituality and stories of saints and mystics for the purpose of tutoring humanity based on the teachings of Islam. According to Faruk Hemden Celebi (2007), this book, consisting of twenty-five thousand of poetical lines, is "Mevlana's most important work" (Gamard & Farhadi, 2008, p. vii); and according to Sufis, it is recognized as a Persian version of *Quran* (Kaynat, n.d.). Another poetical masterpiece of his was *Diwan-I Kebir*. This work is a cocktail of quatrains and lyrical poems (also known as *ruba'is* and *gazels*) through which he carefully and beautifully pictured his gravitation towards God (Gamard & Farhadi, 2008). It is worth noting that those five thousand of verses were all written in honour of Shams, Rumi's most beloved companion, whose name is an alternative title for *Diwan-I Kebir* (which Rumi liked to call *Diwan Shams of Tabriz*) (Kaynat, n.d.).

Rumi's masterworks were not limited to poetical structures. They came in multiple shapes, and touched upon various aspects. *Fihi Ma Fihi,* a book in which seventy-one of the discourses which he delivered in sermons were conjoined, was a work that a group of disciples collaborated to author during Rumi's last chapter in life. Those students took the initiative of realising this work in honour of their teacher for the future generations to be able to get glimpses at his valuable lectures and spiritual teachings (Kaynat, n.d.). At first, it was

only available in the Persian language. Then, like a number of his other works, it went through the process of translation and was released into different lingos, mainly in Turkish and English (Gamard & Farhadi, 2008).

Mejalis-I Seba was another book gathering Rumi's lectures. As its title denotes, it is the recording of seven sermons of the mystic. These sermons were more formal than were the literary or poetical writings of Rumi. Emphasis was given to the content that generally revolved around the prophet Mohammad's sayings (known in Arabic as *hadiths*). In fact, this was an additional book that Rumi did not author. Rather, it was his son Sultan Walad along with Hussam Din Chalabi who were in charge of the authoring.

Respectively, the overall sermons called for following the prophet's path, purifying the heart from every negative feeling, avoiding sinful deeds, and worshiping God with the sole intention of obeying him. Additionally, via these sermons, Rumi called for spiritual richness, which was according to him the most valuable type of richness that could only be achieved when the heart is pure. Throughout it, Rumi proceeded, worshipers would gain God's love and help, the thing that believers should seek and ask for in whatever aspect in life. The two remaining sermons emphasized on the fact that the world is transient, and that attachment to worldly desires might strip people away from being righteous, the thing that would be destructive for them in the hereafter. Eventually, Rumi called for contemplation, knowledge and reflection, for one would never be able to be a true lover of God if he/she does not reflect upon their own selves and the world around them (Kaynat, n.d.).

Maktubat comprised letters that Rumi used to send to officials (Gamard & Farhadi, 2008), as well as to his relatives and friends (Mustafa & Jaafar, 2017). This compilation of one hundred-fifty letters included pieces of advice to statesmen and close ones, recommendations for educational and work opportunities, and responses to religious positions' requests and offers (Kaynat, n.d.).

It is worth noting that not all of Rumi's works were fulfilled during his life. Sultan Walad and those who took the initiative to record what Rumi delivered during the last years continued what they started doing during their master's life. Posthumously, they also used the poet's philosophy and Sufi rituals to shape the *Mevlevi* order (Helminski, 2005).

1.2.3. Shams and Rumi: A Story of a Lifetime Companionship

Shams al-Din Mohammad is a Persian poet and mystic. Born in 1185 in Tabriz, a city in today's Iran, he was nicknamed Shams (Chams in some references) E-Tabrizi, or Shams of Tabriz. The Sufi mystic lived his life as a traveller strolling from one place to another. Consequently, he was surnamed as 'Bird' (Shiva, n.d.).

When the 'Bird' felt like running out of age, he started looking for somebody with whom he would be able to transmit the kernel of what he learned during his adventurous life (ibid). In the Autumn of 1244, approaching sixty years of age, he met Rumi, a teacher that he long heard about, and whom his choice fell upon to bear the knowledge he wanted to share before he dies. In Konya, the two mystics started their journey of contemplation and companionship (Thomas et al., 2012, p.87).

The exceptional meeting of Rumi and Shams is remembered by a tricky question with which the latter addressed the former. Actually, the debate over Shams' query happened in front of a group of Rumi's disciples, when they were marching in the bazaar's thereabouts. The question was a choice, or rather a preference, that Shams asked Rumi to make between Mohammed (peace and prayers be upon him), a prophet and messenger of God, and Bestami, a Sufi mystic. Knowing that the former humbly admitted that he never praised God enough, and that the latter claimed that he did, Rumi chose Mohammed (ppbuh). As an elaboration upon his choice, Rumi clarified that "Bestami took one swallow of knowledge and thought and that was all, but for Muhammad, the majesty was continually unfolding" (Kaynat, n.d., p.20). In other words, while Bestami's conviction stemmed from his limited knowledge of

Him, Muhammad's recognition of God led him to believe in his dereliction to praise Him. To a large extent, this short dialogic interaction between the two is believed to have been the one throughout which Shams truly knew that Rumi was the companion he spent years seeking for (Kaynat, n.d.).

This journey of the two companions is said to have lasted for about two years (ibid), six months from which they spent alone in isolation and confinement. Throughout it, Rumi was inspired to write poetry, introduced to "the secrets of the absolute" (El-Zein, 2000, p.72), and was initiated to "the path of gnosis" (ibid). Actually, To Rumi, Shams was not only an inspiring companion but also "a Pir", a teacher, and a "spiritual guide" (ibid). By the end of those six months that the two companions spent together, confined and isolated, Shams vanished out of blue from the whole town, and left his beloved friend wallowing into agony and distress (El-Zein, 2000). Later on, Rumi's elder son found his father's companion and managed to convince him to get back to him (Kaynat, n.d.).

In point of fact, the journey of the two companions was a controversy. Socially speaking, and in terms of character and status, Shams was the total opposite of Rumi. While the latter came from a wealthy, aristocratic and educated family, the former came from a common background. He was an unpretentious wanderer, mostly described as an ascetic. Opposite to Rumi whose reputation was neat and great, Shams was described as an "*enfant terrible*" (Thomas et al., 2012, p.87). As a matter of fact, the Sufi bird was the most hated not only by Konya's people but also by members in Rumi's family. Shams was unliked by those people due to unconventional behaviour, at first, and then due to his wife's death for which he was accused to be responsible (Shiva, 2018). Consequently, people started hold grudge on him, and chances are that Shams' disappearance after four years of closeness to Rumi was due to a killing act in which he was the victim (Mustapa & Jaafar, 2017). It was recorded that Shams'

assassination happened in 1247, on December 09th . Same sources also hold that even after his death, Shams' corpse was not found (Kaynat, n.d.).

Much of the fame of this Sufi guru in contemporary world philosophy, theology, anthropology, modern subjectivities' studies, and literature, is an outcome of the fame of his beloved companion and master-student Jalal-Din Rumi (Martin Gray, n.d.). Verily, Shams was Rumi's *nom de guerre* (Mustapa & Jaafar, 2017), or *nom de plume* (Thomas et al., 2012, p. 488). Out of respect, friendship, love, and agony after Shams' departure, Rumi wrote the most emotional of his lyrical poetry; and as a way of praising him after being the source of his inspiration and guidance towards that brand-new type of writing that he engaged in, Rumi named those poetical lines - as *Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīzī*. It is worth mentioning that the number of the lines making up those poems exceeded thirty-six thousand (ibid).

1.2.4. Women in the Rumi Circle

Rumi was surrounded by a number of women. Mostly, those females were part of his family. It is in fact thanks to these women that spiritual leadership remained the inherited property of Rumi's family (Taheri, 2013). His mom Mumina Khatun had a blood kinship with one of Khorasan's kings (Shiva, 2018). In his seventeens (in Larende, 1224), Rumi married Gawhar Khatun with whom he had two sons: Sultan Walad & Aladdin (Helminski, 2005). Shortly after their marriage, Rumi' first wife died (Thomas at al., 2012). Among the women in the Rumi circle was Fatima Khatun as well, Sultan Walad's wife with whom he gave birth to Mottahara Khatun and Sharaf Khatun. The three previously mentioned women were recognized for being educated, virtuous and that they "were believed to be the possessors of sainthood … by [Rumi's] morids" (Taheri, 2013, p.49).

Soon after the death of his first wife, the poet married Kerra Khatun with whom he had a son and a daughter named Maleka Khatun (Thomas et al., 2012). In his biography on Rumi, titled *Manaqeb al-ʿArefin*, Ahmed Aflaki reported that Kerra was an intelligent, well-

esteemed lady, respected by both Rumi and his disciples. He also mentioned that she was "financially independent and a source of financial support to the family as well" (Taheri, 2013, p. 49), as she benefitted from part of the incomes of Rumi's *madrasa,* even after her husband's death (Taheri, 2013).

Other women belonging to the feminine circle of the Rumi were Sultan's Walad second and third wives, Sanbola Khatun and Nosra Khatun, whom he married after the death of his first wife Fatima. Both of these women were serving as maids in Rumi's house. However, the respect they received was by no means less than that which other women received in the family of the poet (Taheri, 2013). Respectively, the ladies gave birth to two of Rumi's grandsons, Abed and Vajed who would inherit the lead of the Sufi tradition after the death of their elder brother, Fatima Khatun's son, Amir Aref Chalapi (Taheri, 2013).

Those women, mainly Kerra as well as Fatima and Sharaf Khatun, were firm defenders on the Sufi heritage of Rumi. They all worked on maintaining the spiritual guidance, that Rumi and his father used to be in charge of, as a familial legacy that should keep being transmitted from one to another in the family's offspring. Eventually, those women managed to realize what they aimed at. The spiritual leadership, thus, went back to the family of the great poet of love through Sultan Walad's scions after it went out of it when Rumi handed leadership to Ṣalaḥ al-Dīn Zarkub following Shams' death (Thomas et al., 2012), and to his faithful *morid* Husam Din Chalabi who was appointed to be in charge of it after Jalal's death (Taheri, 2013). In this respect, Ahmed Aflaki mentioned that:

> Rumi's female family members, Kera Khatun and Fatima Khatun particularly, were fully aware of the significance of his high spiritual and social status, trying to maintain the path of leadership for their descendants by emphasising their inherited sainthood. They apparently were not comfortable with the fact that Rumi had appointed Hisam al-Din Chalapi, his successor, believing that the spiritual leadership of the order should remain in the family (Taheri, 2013, p. 50).

According to Aflaki, Kerra and Fatima did never appreciate Rumi's method of nominating Sufi leaders, which he only applied following his ancestors' footsteps. Sultan Walad was, therefore, blamed for not calling for his 'right' in taking the lead of the Sufi tradition after his father's death. After him, the two women strongly stood on Amir Arif's side when he was appointed as a leader although he lacked the qualities of wisdom, modesty and patience that his father and grandfathers acquired (Taheri, 2013).

In terms of companionship, Rumi had two female-friends. Their names were Nezam Khatun and Fakhr al-Nisa. Both of these females were recognized for their wisdom, high virtues, and for their good grasp of spiritual standards. In admiration of their intelligence and spirituality, Rumi offered Fakhr al-Nisa the title of 'the perfect saint', and organized the Sufi ceremony of *sama* in Nezam Khatun's house (Taheri, 2013).

Another woman, who was considered as part of the Rumi circle although she did not have blood relationship with Rumi and his family, was Kimya Khatun. The latter was the wife of Rumi's most beloved companion, Shams of Tabriz. In point of fact, writing about Kimia has always been considered to be tricky for the discrepancy of historical accounts on her. First of all, in some biographical accounts she was referred to as Rumi's stepdaughter from his second wife Kerra (Shiva, n.d.). In other books, however, it has been mentioned that Kimia was only Rumi's foster daughter whose intelligence and talents pushed and qualified her to be his special student that he adopted her (Maufroy, 2005). Concerning her background, some biographies stated that Kimia was raised in a wealthy family, while other sources said that she was a daughter of a farmer coming from a rural village (Shafak, 2010). In another regard, some historical references spoke about the existence of a love story with Kimia and Aladdin, Rumi's son (Shiva, n.d.). Other accounts, however, mentioned that the young girl was actually in love with Shams of Tabriz (Shafak, 2010).

Overall, besides being intelligent and talented, Kimia was apparently beautiful that both of Rumi's son Aladdin and his companion Shams seem to have fallen in love with her. Eventually, she married Shams at a very young age (twelve years old) (Shiva, n.d.). A number of historians tackling the life of Rumi mentioned that Kimia was forced to marry Shams, and that the whole idea of their marriage was arranged for the sole intention of keeping Shams around Rumi. This, sources elaborated, was highly opposed by Aladdin. Actually, Shams and Kimia's marital relationship did not last so long. Soon after their wedding, the young girl died and Shams disappeared. There is no accurate information on what happened first, yet Shams was believed to be the first defendant in Kimia's death.

In her book, *Rumi's Untold Story* (2018), Shahram Shiva mentioned that Kimya died feeling left out because of the confinement that Shams imposed on her, especially that he knew of Aladdin's feelings towards her, out of jealousy, obsession and because of Shams' character being a calibre mystic. The same author also believes that Shams was killed in a collaboratively planned assassination in which Aladdin was involved in collaboration with the police, along with many townspeople who continuously deprecated against Shams because of his unconventional behaviour and due to Kimia's surprising death. In this regard, the killing act of Shams was hidden from Rumi's eyes and ears. Consequently, the latter spent the rest of his life thinking that his companion left the town out of grief after his beloved's death (Shiva, n.d.).

1.2.5. Rumi's Lifetime Lessons

In the school of life, Rumi was a perseverant student. To Shams, he was an honest companion. To the rest, surroundings or compatriots, disciples or readers, he was a conscientious and diligent teacher whose teachings conveyed lifetime messages that still apply to today's world. Although he claimed that his words follow a straightforward simple path that stems from the heart and mind and stretches towards the minds, without

embellishment or over-ornamentation, still they managed to make him popular and internationally recognized today. Rumi did not care about words per se, rather, his main focus and interest was delving into the meanings that lie behind these utterances (Kaynat, n.d.).

Nevertheless, one of the main things that Rumi believed in and keenly insisted on was in words ability to verbalize divine love although he always held that their capability of conveying feelings is limited. Furthermore, if there is one thing that can be learnt from this Sufi teacher, it would be that there is only one eternally valid love. It is that of God. Regardless of all the mundane attachments to things and persons, this divine love is the only true love that would remain even when all those worldly beloveds perish. ("Rumi", 2022). For Rumi, although the spiritual type is of utmost importance, all love is good. Nonetheless, searching for it should not be human's chief interest. Rather, people should delve into their inner selves, look for every barricade preventing the flow of this supreme feeling, and pull efforts to get them out of the flowing way (Kaynat, n.d.).

Additionally, according to Kaynat, Jalal's Sufism required going through four main steps, obliterating the ego, purifying the heart, constantly remembering God in whatever deed intended to be done, and being one with God (known as *fana*). Once these elements are embraced by a certain person, he/she could be considered part of the Sufi order (also known as *tariqa*). The latter is, according to all Sufis including Rumi, the version of Islam that emphasises faith rather than *fiqh* (fundamental Islamic principles), the thing that makes the Sufis a privileged sect (ibid). This is also what could be deduced when going over Jalal's writings, that faith matters more than principles do.

Another thing left from Rumi's teaching heritage is that thoughts matter. In every human mind there is an internecine warfare whose conflicting sides are positive and negative ideas. Men should control these ideas well for the positive ones to thrive and win (ibid). Rumi believed that thoughts also take forms later on in life, or in the hereafter. To him, they are like

seeds in the human mind. They grow, blossom, proliferate and form gardens; yet, they only do that after receiving the necessary care they need. Thus, the human being is likened to a gardener who should cultivate well those seeds for them to flourish and take beautiful forms when they return to their owner (Safi, 2022).

Moreover, the Sufi mystic believed that people are pursued by the things that they are in search for. In this vein, there is a well-known saying, which has been coined to Rumi, whose (mis)translation went viral on social media and different internet platforms. It says "What you seek is seeking you". A more correct translation of this line is actually "You are what you seek", which corresponds with Rumi's previously mentioned philosophy (Arishto, 2022).

Life is nothing but a dream. To Rumi, the world is only a delusion. To him, also, reality lies on the crossroads of goodness and wickedness which are both the possession of God who created them both for humans' service. Verily, it is through opposing experiences that one learns; and through ambivalent feelings that God teaches men that they possess more than one tool to take wing. In fact, Jalal held that the human soul is a double-sided coin. While one side is good, the other is bad. It is only when spiritual conscience is more powerful and dominant than sensuality that the good side is brought to the fore and eventually wins (Kaynat, n.d.).

God also holds the keys of forgiveness and punishment. He is the master and the controller. Although he privileges prophets, prophecy is not offered to them on a silver platter. Like everyone, they should work hard for them to deserve being labelled as messengers of God. Likewise, all believers should be perseverant following the example of God's chosen prophets (ibid).

Rumi's philosophy also considered that all kinds of knowledge are important; and yet, the spiritual one is the kernel of all learning ways. Sciences are lifeless, at times even meaningless, until that spiritual consciousness comes along and pours life into them (ibid).

There is no room for intolerance, racism, sexism, and religious fanaticism in Rumi's teachings. All men are equal. There is no difference between a Muslim and a non-Muslim, since they are all lovers of God. The path does not matter whenever the target is God. There is no spiritual difference between men and women either. Actually, women are the micro-sample to the process of creation for they are provided with wombs into which new lives are created. This divine role of creating lives and being in charge of nurturing and raising is the result of God's bestowment to their hearts with passion and love (ibid).

Rumi had his own definition for a perfect man. To him, for somebody to be considered perfect he has to have his heart pure from acrimony and antagonism. Also, he who wants to be elevated to the degree of perfectness has to live the moment, for to all Sufis, past and future are of no importance in comparison with the present time. A perfect man does not think of anything out of the actual issues he is actually experiencing (ibid).

1.2.6. Blasphemous Rumi

Although he was loved East and West, Rumi was also accused of being a blasphemy generator in the eyes of many critics due to the poems that were coined to him. In Saudi Arabia, his name is still uttered with resentment, and his works are socially banned. The reason behind this is the anti-religious stream that poems of Rumi seem to have taken, the thing that irritated so many Middle-Eastern clerics. Nevertheless, although similar works usually go through censorship regulations, Rumi's poems did not (Shiva, 2017).

Mostly, the accusation that Rumi received was against pieces and parts from his translated *Divan E-Shams Tabrizi*. A sample from it is the following poem:

I have lost myself in God
and now God is mine
Don't look for Him in every direction
for He is in my soul
I am the Sultan
I would be lying
If I said that there is someone who is my sultan
(Shiva, 2019, para. 04)

Rumi received so much criticism due to these lines. Throughout them, he expressed his refusal to be under the reign of God. To him, God is not the Master, for He is by no means outside people's souls. Such words have put Rumi under the loop of criticism. Even though chances are that the poet -supposing that those lines are really his- was only being figurative, he was considered heretic by many.

Another group of people interested in Rumi's aura went far by trying to prove that he was not at all Muslim. This accusation proliferated mainly in the Western area of the world, following the fame that the Persian poet received there. Holders of such view are believed to have wanted to displace the poet from the Oriental ideological and geographical column to a more globalized, and thus a more appreciated, area. One way those people used to justify their claims was throughout his sayings. An instance to this was a widely spread poem, titled "Only Breath" that was coined to Rumi in Coleman Barks' *The Essential Rumi* (1995) (sharghzadeh, 2021). This poem says:

Not Christian or Jew or Muslim,
Not Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi, or ***Zen****.*
Not any religion or ***cultural system****.*
I am not from the East or the West,
Not out of the ocean or up from the ground,
Not natural or ethereal,
Not composed of elements at all.

I do not exist,

Am not an entity in this world or the next,

Did not descend from Adam or Eve or any origin story

My place is placeless,

A trace of the traceless

Neither body or soul.

I belong to the beloved,

Have seen the two worlds as one and that one call to and know,

First, last, outer, inner, only that

Breath breathing human being

(Barks, 1995, p.32)

According to many, this poem bear witness that Rumi was atheist and stateless. Throughout it he declared that he did not belong to any of the Muslim, Christian, or Jewish communities, and thus he held none of their beliefs. Moreover, the poem also stated that Rumi did not belong to Sufis either. However, taking into consideration the transformative journey that Jalal's writings went through, the extent of the accuracy of this poem is too questionable to qualify it to be used for biographical purposes. Furthermore, scrutinizing "Only Breadth" with regard to its genre allows comprehending it as a mere imagination-sourced poetical piece, written using a figurative language which might have interpretations different than the denotative meaning of the words which make it up.

Rumi was also accused for being involved in an intimate relationship with his male companion Shams of Tabriz. This homosexuality-accusation came as a result of some interpretations of his poems throughout which Rumi repeatedly expressed strong feelings of 'love' that he harboured to Shams. Verily, this accusation seems to be groundless and unfounded, since its roots are only found in the 'versions' that have been introduced by a homosexual author and translator called Andrew Harvey. The latte, hence, must have introduced his own rectifications to Rumi's works in a way that reflected his own sexual orientations (Kaynat, n.d.).

Furthermore, those allegations may also have born out of both the mistranslation and misunderstanding of the word 'love' which is spiritual and divine in the original Persian versions, while it is romanticized in many of the Western translations. 'Love' in Persian is coined to the feelings someone can have for the creator, while the same word in the contemporary West is linked to romantic engagements. Translations in such case are not believed to have taken the originals through the cultural sieve. Consequently, meanings were not filtered, and thus they changed, and the poem was received differently by different readers (ibid).

In the Persian, Sufi, or the Muslim community in general, it is likely to find a group of men spending so much time together for purposes like spiritual teaching-learning. In the West, however, especially nowadays, things are different. Contemporary Westerners tend to avouch that there is no possibility for two male persons, having any kind of feelings for each other and spending some time together in a confinement, not to be involved in a romantic relationship. Consequently, such people had different interpretations of the period in which the two companions alienated themselves from society for spiritual purposes (ibid), and since most of the translations reaching the Orient nowadays are based on English versions, the situation was understood similarly by Orientals. Knowing that such sexual inclinations are more scandalous there, therefore, explains why Rumi was at times rejected in the East.

In fact, there are many other things which make invalid such homosexual accusations. On the one hand, Rumi was already married by the time he met Shams. On the other hand, both of the two mystics had religious education and prestige that would prevent such oblique thoughts from being concretised. On top of that, the difference of age between the two might also stand as an additional argument against those who accuse Rumi, and Shams, for being homosexual (ibid).

Other accusations that chased Rumi were because of alcohol and non-belonging to Sufism. The first one was due to the use of the words like 'tavern', 'wine' and 'drunk' in a number of his poems. The word wine, for instance, has been used more than thirty times in his works. Nevertheless, being in touch with Rumi's works and philosophy in general as well as the Sufi culture enables the reader to understand that such words were only used for metaphorical purposes in original versions. The word 'wine' for example is usually used to refer to love among Sufis (ibid).

Besides this, both Rumi and Shams were known for being religious in their communities, and thus, drinking or praising drunkenness is believed to be far from what have been recorded about their traits and ethics. As per the last-mentioned accusation, based on many sources, nothing can confirm whether Rumi was a Sufi or not due to the unavailability of sources in which he explicitly labelled himself as such. However, all what can be said about this is that the Persian poet did actually have Sufi traits, behaved in a Sufi way, interacted with Sufis, and was remembered and praised by the Sufi community (ibid).

1.2.7. Rumi's Departure: A Wedding Day and Night of Union!

In 1273, December the seventeenth (Jumada-Thani 05th, 672 AH in Hijri calendar) Rumi breathed his last at the age of sixty-six years, many of which were dedicated to spreading spirituality, poetry, love, mercy, and to serving the Sufi tradition. The Sufi guru died after suffering from a terminal disease starting from the Autumn of the same year. Until his death, people kept believing in his '*Baraka*' and kept asking for his prayers and blessings especially after the earthquakes that hit Konia forty days before the poet's departure from life. Until he spelled his last breath, Rumi kept sharing positivity among his people, saying that the earth trembled just out of hunger, and that it will soon chill as soon as it swallows a sweet soul that is on her way to its abdomen (ibid).

In fact, Rumi was very reconciled with the idea of death as he believed that it is not people's final stage. Rather, he was convinced that death only frees the soul from the body that has long encaged it. Few moments away from death, his wife asked him to pray for God to lengthen his life. Answering her, he stated: "Am I a thief ? Have I stolen someone's goods ? Is this why you would confine me here and keep me from being re-joined with my Love ? " (Zirrar, 2021, para. 21). In other words, Jalal saw that life is only a prison that encages good people until their turn comes to move to the other world where their meeting with their most beloved, i.e. God, would take place. Thus, for Rumi, death only sets good people free. It is only a bridge that leads to a better place. Therefore, the day Rumi left was known as "The Wedding Day", as it was a happy day in which he was believed to have finally and eternally been with his Beloved (Zirrar, 2021). Another headline to his departure was 'Night of Union', because in his death's night Rumi's soul finally rose to join the Creator (Kaynat, n.d.).

Rumi died leaving a spiritual and literary heritage that continues to keep the successive generations reminiscent of his life. The forty-days funeral of this great poet was attended by people of all colours, ages, and religious backgrounds (Mustapa & Jaafar, 2017). People from distant places moved to Konia to celebrate the 'wedding day' of *Molana*. After that day -they thought- , the poet enjoyed an everlasting happiness in paradise. Soon after his death, Badr-Din Tabrizi, the guru's architect and disciple, was appointed by the Sultan of Seljuk empire to be in charge of building a green dome over Rumi's tomb, to make sacred his death-place by turning it into a shrine (Kaynat, n.d.).

1.3. Islam and Modern Subjectivities

For a long time, modern studies and Islam were believed to be parallel lines whose meetings is impossible. However, this myth started to be broken by the publication of Saba Mahmood's *Politics of Piety*, which in its turn, was supported by Lara Deeb's *An Enchanted Modern*. Giving evidences about Muslim women in Egypt and Iran, upon whom the concept

of agency was fulfilled, both writers proved the capability of the inclusion of Islam into modern studies. Following their lead, Jung and Sinclair worked on widening the horizon of studies upon modernity by the insertion of cultural and social theories and considerations in their academic project. Jung and Sinclair, along with others, brought to the fore Islamic subjectivities as linking points between Islam and modernity. New Sufism was a resulting ideology which worked as a bridge between orthodox Islam and secular modern studies. In this section, modern subjectivities and Islamic modernities' formation, as well as Jung and Sinclair's MMSP are going to be delved into.

1.3.1. Modern Subjectivities and Islamic Modernities

Modernity and Islam are two conceptions that have long been put on opposite directions. Before the expansion of studies on modern subjectivities, they have always been considered as bitter enemies which never reconciliated, and never would be on good terms. However, more recent scholarship had a different word regarding this relationship, claiming that previous studies neglected religion when defining and identifying modern subjectivities. Therefore, those modern studies on the matter conducted revisions on old conclusions and came up with new results (Jung & Sinclair, 2020).

One main work which defended such revised views was *Politics of Piety* by Saba Mahmood, a book that stressed the key-role that religion plays in shaping modern subjectivities. Throughout this work, the Pakistani born professor in cultural anthropology was able to make visible some former invisible threads linking modern feminist waves and Muslim women. As such, she was able to spot the traps in former studies about modernity which actually dismissed Islam from the scope it encompassed. This negligence, led the anthropologist to call for a revision for archaic conceptions and assumptions about modernity and modern subjectivities, because based on her analyses, they only scrutinized things from periphery and throughout the Western secular scope (Kiran, 2021).

Mahmood's five chapters' book presented alternative descriptions on how Muslim women do have a room in the Western feminist cocoon by bringing to the fore the notion of 'agency' with regard to the nature of the Muslim world. By definition, agency is "the ability to identify goals or make choices and then act upon them" ("*What is Agency and why does it Matter for Women's Empowerment ?* ", 2019, para.01). Merging it into feminism, it is about women's ability to trace their own paths according to their own convictions, which has long been seen as something that Muslim women are deprived of, wearing the Western secular lenses. In contrast to this, Mahmood believed that if previous research took into consideration the culture of Muslims, they would have concluded that the Islamic world with both of his male and female inhabitants does encourage the notion of agency (Kiran, 2021).

In this vein, Saba Mahmood argued that Western feminists laid down restricted Western liberal definitions of agency which did not take into consideration the different beliefs that women hold and defend in the Muslim community. Even if those beliefs are patriarchal through secular lenses, still they are convictions and choices of their holders. As such, they -too- can be considered as performances of agency (Johnson & Fairweather, 2017).

The sample that Mahmood handed was the 1995's feminine movement that was conducted by pious Egyptian women from various backgrounds in various places in Egypt. These women were highly involved in holding and attending active discussions which tried to analyse and sought to interpret religious verses and Islamic discourses (Kiran, 2021). It is through these "Pietistic women's movement in Cairo that Mahmood explicitly wanted to criticize feminist theories that build exclusively on secular-liberal understandings of agency, body, and authority in constructing the everyday lives of modern women" (qtd in Jung, 2017, p. 15).

That sense of questioning and reflecting, instead of blindly absorbing things, that the previously mentioned women were doing was, according to *Politics of Piety*, worth

considering. In a similar manner, culture and different social mindsets are to be taken into consideration when tackling freedom. The latter should not be, and is no more, limited and identified according to the Western secular understanding of the word. Rather, freedom is a flexible concept, open to interpretations, and able to change shape whenever the pot it is put into changes (kiran, 2021).

Saba Mahmood's work was a blockbuster. It made a revolution ever since its publication, both because of its content and because of the timing of its publication. The book was a smart move as it shifted attentions towards what is now known as 'Modern Muslim Subjectivities'. The latter is concerned with the inclusion of the community of Muslims into studies upon modernity, in a time when Islam was underrated and under the fire in the West, especially in the aftermath of the incidents of 09/11 (ibid).

In a similar manner, Lara Deeb, a Lebanese anthropologist, walked on the same path as her fellow previously mentioned writer and professor of anthropology. In her book, titled *An Enchanted Modern (2006),* she scrutinized a movement that was led by Shiite women. Those female activists were calling for their right to freely live "an authentic form of Islam" (Jung, 2017, p. 15). This life might have been considered as a form of imposed slavery in the eyes of Western feminists, while it was in fact a principled and virtuous one according to those rebellious women (Jung, 2017).

Nevertheless, in their turn, such views have also been criticised for presenting the relationship between religion and modernity in a peripheral way, that although linked to each other, they still seem impossible to be intertwined. In regard of what have been mentioned, Soares and Osella, stated that, "contemporary scholarship on Islam still has a tendency to perceive modern Islam not as an intrinsic part of global modernity, but represents Muslims as conscripts of Western modernity, engaging with modernity as an external force" (qtd in Jung & Sinclair, 2020, p.01).

In their introduction on "Islamic Modernities & Modern Muslim Subjectivities", Jung and Sinclair expressed a firm belief that modernity is an umbrella under which everybody and everything should be gathered. In this vein, they stated that "we are all modern, however, we are modern in different ways" (Ibid, p.02). This way, Jung and Sinclair announced their honest opposition to those who claim that there is a type of otherhood in the relation between Islam and modernity, and consequently between Islam and the Western world and civilization (Jung & Sinclair, 2020).

1.3.2. Modern Muslim Subjectivities Project (MMSP)

In fact, views of Jung and Sinclair on religion, Islam, modernity and modern subjectivities have their roots in the MMSP, whose idea takes back its origins in Saba Mahmood's work. The latter laid the foundation for the inclusion of Islam in research upon modern subjectivities by opening up modern studies, on Muslim women. This is, actually, where Mahmood's book was criticised for being limited, because the scope of research was confined to Muslim women only, which formed one category of Muslims (Jung, 2017).

Ergo, MMSP was founded as a greater academic project interested at revision of, and delving into the relationship between studies on Islam and social theories (Jung & Sinclair, 2020). This research program first sought for the impacts of social theories over "the formation of modern forms of subjectivity". Then, it applied them over Muslims and the Muslim world in general (Jung, 2017). This project helped enriching debates over multiple modernities by also seeking to identify whether Western and modern Muslim subjectivities are of radical difference, or they only are branches deriving from a same root ("Modern Muslim Subjectivities Project", 2018).

It is worth mentioning that it is Andreas Reckwitz's work, which tackled modern subjectivity formation, that led Jung to think about MMSP. Reckwitz's studies were marked by considering Western cultural, historical and sociological aspects. Doing so, he was blamed

for neglecting those same aspects belonging to other parts of the world. Jung firmly believed that Andreas was aware of this (ibid). In this vein, he stated that "Reckwitz himself is aware of this limitation and points in the introduction of his book to his omission of the rest of the world" (Jung, 2017, p. 13). It is in fact this, besides neglecting religious considerations, which led Jung to start his project away from contemporary social theorists and their reductionist views. Such views contradicted studies of prominent founding fathers of Sociology, amongst which was Marx Weber, in the way they "abandoned building their conceptual reflections on the comparative study of world cultures" (ibid, p.14).

Unfortunately, the Weberian stream was not popular among both Western and Eastern sociologists. Sociological studies, in which cultural and historical differences were taken into account, were underrated in the Western mainstream sociology. Likewise, Oriental sociologists held similar views and believed in Oriental exceptionalism, excluding the possibility of understanding Islam apart from its mother arena in the Middle-East. However, step by step, both parties accessed studies on modern subjectivities. The former could infiltrate human and social sciences under the umbrella of multiple modernities, while the latter witnessed the application of social theories in modern studies on Islam (ibid). In this regard, conducted analysis on Islam began to encompass "the exploration of forms of religious discourse and social practices in the everyday life of Muslims" (ibid, p.15).

Overall, formerly mentioned anthropologists Like Saba Mahmood and Lara Deeb are reckoned to be among the firsts who took the initiative to include the Islamic strand into studies on modern subjectivities (ibid). Walking on the exact same path, other sociologists, anthropologists, translators and writers continued the same walk on the same path, uttering works, all aiming at unveiling and seeking for the links between Islam and 'modern subjectivities'. Those people also started trying to re-understand and re-explain aspects from the Islamic religion that were not likely to be included in research on modern subjectivities.

Among the prominent contemporary writers who carried the torch of Mahmood and Deeb is Elif Shafak. Throughout her seminal work, titled *The Forty Rules of Love* (2010), the Turkish writer participated in igniting the fame of what is known as 'Eclectic Sufism'. The latter is recognized as a bridge via which Islamic principles and Western secular thinking exchanged acquaintances, and as part and parcel in the project of modern Muslim subjectivities, linking the East to the West. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that such contribution that Shafak provided to 'New Age Sufism' was only a continuation of what many interpreters introduced when translating writings of Rumi. Works of a number of those authors and translators were, in fact, the sources that Elif used and relied upon for the fulfilment of her double-layered narrative. Among them were books and translations of Coleman Barks, William Chittick, and Kabir Helminski to name but a few (Shafak, 2010).

1.4. Sufism, Neo-Sufism and the Good Muslim

The appearance of the neo-Sufi movement revived archaic discussions upon the Sufi ideology as a whole and its relationship to Islam. While original Sufism is recognized as a spiritual manifestation of Islam, New Age Sufism falls into a serious debate between those who consider it as a non-Islamic ideology and those who see it as a 'modernized' Islam resulting from the modern construction of Islamic subjectivities.

By all means, (New)Sufism is described as a subjective re-interpretation of Islam, domesticated and universalized. Such ideological branch grew popular in the West throughout its extensive use by Orientalists in their (translated) versions of Oriental works, since Sufism is considered as part of the Oriental culture. The most famous among those writings were the Rumi-based versions. Consequently, the popularity of the writings of those authors popularized Rumi that he turned into an idol among the Western literary readers. Such fascination with the Persian guru was known as 'Rumi-mania'. The latter formed a phenomenon of its own, which in its turn was labelled as 'The Rumi Phenomenon'. Elif

Shafak is believed to be one of the prominent figures taking part in this phenomenon as she participated in the construction of the fame of the (New)Sufi culture and Sufi figure like Shams and Rumi through *The Forty Rules of Love*. Throughout the following parts, Sufism and New Sufism are going to be positioned regarding their relationship with Islam, the West, the incidents of 09/11, and the notion of universality. Besides that, the Rumi fame and phenomenon will be tackled, along with Elif's contribution to that.

1.4.1. Sufism and the Possibility of Global Integration

Original Sufism, traditional Sufism, or simply Sufism, is considered as the heart of Islamic teachings. In fact, it is a personification of Islamic mysticism (Lings,1975). In this vein, Annemarie Schimmel believed that Sufism is "the mystical dimension of Islam" (qtd in Cihan-Artun, 2016, p. 20). On the same track, R. A. Nicholson said that it is definitely "the religious philosophy of Islam" (ibid). Those two, among others, appreciated Sufism in its original version.

Sufism, in its original version, is traced back to the eighth century Iraq, the hub of spirituality at the time. At the beginning, such Islamic mysticism was all about those gatherings inside specific lodges (known as *takye*, in Turkey, or *khaneqah*, among Iranians) where Sufi teachers (known as *sheikhs*) met to reflect upon new ways of mysticism's teaching-learning, and to innovate novel techniques and concepts of deification. Such thing was intrinsically founded for the purpose of reaching the highest possible degree of oneness with God, i.e. *tawhid*. Through time, those techniques and concepts were standardized, more people embraced the Sufi mode of life and worship, and schools were created to gather Sufi students (also known as disciples or *Murids*) upon sticking to the right behaviour (known as *adab*) and learning the Sufi ways of God's veneration (Cihan-Artun, 2016).

Martin Lings was among the major proponents asserting the religiosity of Sufism and its capability of global integration in its original version. The researcher firmly reckoned that

religiosity and differences between human faiths does not eliminate the possibility of a healthy and peaceful co-existence of people from different civilizations. Therefore, he stated:

> Each theocratic civilization is a unique and homogeneous whole, different from others but just as fruits are different but taste alike in essence so are the ideologies of these civilizations. With their forms they are particular and unique … Each mysticism should be seen in light of this particularity and universality: particular owing to their distinctions and universal by dint of their path leading to the central truth. All mysticisms are similar in their quintessence, though they differ in their superficialities (Lings, 1975- qtd in Anjum & Ramzan, 2014-, p.01)

Like Lings, Anjum and Ramzan also believed that religious branches share mutual essence and that their kernel differences are only shallow. Mysticism is not exclusive to Islam. It is to religions just like a radius is to a circle, it can change place, there are millions of it which can be drawn from the centre to the circumference of the circle, but they all belong to the same circle and they all form a same unit by which dimensions can be counted. All religions have their own mysticism, and Islam's one is Sufism. Islam and Sufism, like other religious and mystical modes, are all capable of universal integrity (Anjum & Ramzan, 2014).

1.4.2. Eclectic Sufism and the Good Muslim: Rumi as a Model

As a consequence to the modern construction of Islamic subjectivities, alternative conceptions and ideologies, like 'New Age Sufism' or simply 'New Sufism', also labelled as 'Eclectic Sufism', came to existence. Eclectic Sufism by definition is a "reinterpretation of Islamic traditions to incorporate globally relevant social imaginaries" (Sedgwick, 2017, p.65). In other words, the concept can be understood as a subjective re-reading of Islam. Consequently, it is also considered as a re-interpretation of the original Sufi tradition, and a refinement of its tenets in a way that facilitates its integration in the Western cultural market, and its presentation to worldwide readers (Sedgwick, 2017).

Such modern conceptual ideologies witnessed an increasingly rapid propagation. By the turning of the second half of the twentieth century, they were implicitly inserted in the

different Western translations of Rumi and they were advertised for, the thing that led to displacing old and original versions. East, resulting translations made of Rumi considered as no more than an "incidental Muslim who promoted pantheistic theosophy remnant of the supposed Hindu & Greek origins of Sufism" (Cihan-Artun, 2016, p.vii). West, however, they presented the poet as "the epitome of the good Muslim" (p.03), considering that 'good Muslim' stands for someone embracing a domesticated version of Islam, more congruent with Western ideologies, values and culture. Also, such domestic Islam is believed to be more universal so as to enable good Muslims like Rumi to find a room in a West-dominated world of globalization (Cihan-Artun, 2016).

This ambassador of good Muslims, through his representation in translated works, actually represented 'good Islam' as imagined by Westerners. Taking into consideration that "representation tells more about the subject (representer) than the subject of study (the represented)" (ibid, p.04), the actual translations of Rumi could be judged for telling more about the way Western writers and readers expected the Persian mystic to be, being a good Muslim, rather than informing about who he really was. Consequently, those translated works presented and advertised for Sufism and Islam the way Westerners wished them to be, and not the way they truly are.

Rumi's translated poems are the most relevant, globally known samples representing the new age mysticism. Controversy upon them was the same as that which has been triggered upon the whole Sufi movement in its modern look. In other words, versions of Rumi had their own proponents and fans, as much as they had those who criticised them.

Amira El-Zein, an associate professor specialised in hermeneutics, religion, literary criticism and gender studies, once claimed that "the Pseudo-Sufis and their New Sufism has stripped Rumi of its traditional Islamic values to create something new, which might be helpful to some, but is totally devoid of essence of its source" and is thus rejected to others

(qtd in Mehdi, Hussain & Abdullah, 2021, p. 71). Putting it differently, the researcher argued that it is inevitable to admit that Rumi's translations took off their Islamic vestures throughout the so-called Sufi phenomenon. Doing so, they appeared in a non-Islamic new look that enabled their integration in the Western literary community, the thing that was not appreciated on the parallel Eastern side (Mehdi, Hussain & Abdullah, 2021).

In contradiction to what El-Zein held, other researchers claim that New Age Sufism does not totally obliterate Islamic principles, and that it is not void of Islamic spirit. Rather, according to Haenni & Voix, it is about keeping the Islamic essence, and adding a modern touch to it in a way that gives it a modern look, easy to be integrated in today's individualistic societies. In this vein, the two previously mentioned scholars said that "eclectic Sufism [is about] … re-inscribe New Age spirituality into Islam, re-affirming the centrality of the Islamic reference while retaining contemporary notions of individualism" (qtd in Sedgwich, 2017, p.66). By the same token, Rumi's versions are Islamic in essence, universal in periphery.

What is worth noting anyway is that Rumi's Sufism, as a philosophy and a spiritual movement, is different than traditional Sufism. If the latter is strongly attached to its Islamic vessel, the former stands free from attachments. Justifiers in this regard state that based on the way it represents religion, Rumi's Sufism might look dissimilar just the way a painting might look different to different viewers each time the viewing angle changes due to different places that the observer occupies (Kaynat, n.d.). Viewing angles change; and yet, the picture remains the same. Likewise, Islamic religiosity is the same; and yet, its spiritual representations throughout the different writings varied, and so does their reception. Similarly, Rumi is one, but his representations and reactions to his writings differed.

Verily, a wide legion of contemporary writers adopted Sufism in its modern version, also referred to as 'Neo-Sufism', as an alternative for Islam. These writers hold the belief that

Neo-Sufism is free from the social limitations and orthodox principles that organized religions are based on and call for. Furthermore, they see it as a spiritual refuge for proponents of universality. According to them, such refuge is meant to gather the Muslim and the non-Muslim under one roof (Anjum & Ramzan, 2014).

The modern-day Sufi movement is actually seen as an umbrella under which all those who are thirsty for a sip of spirituality, in the consumerist-materialistic modern world, refuged (Mehdi, Hussain & Abdullah, 2021). Be it a Muslim or a non-Muslim, Sufism could be embraced as a philosophy of life (Kaynat, n.d.), for "its message of peace with and for all" (Kucuk, 2000, p. 160) is relevant every time and everywhere (Kaynat, n.d.).

1.4.3. New Sufism: Key Components

Sufism as a philosophy was, according to Mark Sedgwick, highly influenced by Neoplatonism (2017). Hence, the two had similar views regarding "the nature of God, the soul, the body, concepts such as goodness, evil and beauty, death and life, and creation" (Godelec, 1998, p. 57). Views upon the previously mentioned elements, besides other components are what makes the Sufi ideology. New Sufism continued building over those aspects, re-defined common notions like love and submission (*tawakkul*), broadened the horizon of Sufi practices like *sema*, reconsidered 'wine' , and re-identified the utility of silence. By the same token, New-Sufi writings also touched upon those previously mentioned aspects.

Love is one of the most important themes in New-Sufi writings. This notion has always been part of the Sufi tradition in relation to divinity and God. When love is combined with spirituality, and when this feeling brings people closer to the Creator, it could be labelled as a Neoplatonic love. According to Deborah Vess, Neoplatonic love is "only another name for that self-reverting current from God to the world and from the world to God" (Sadiq, 2006, para. 01).

Another notion that (New)Sufi writings are replete with is submission, also called *tawakkul*. The latter is, in fact, considered as the "pith of faith" (Lewisohn,1999, p. 28). Thus, it is no surprise coming across such element in (New)Sufi writings. Submission in such cases does not spur being helpless and weak with others. Rather, it is about "the absolute dependence" (ibid, p. 27) and the full trust that one should have in God (Lewisohn, 1999).

Another component of New Sufism is the *sema* practice. The universe dances and moves in circles, and so do the whirling *dervishes* through their traditional dance called *Mawlawi*. To them, this circular dance is a means that helps them in their quest for the beloved. Also, it is a way of expressing ecstasy.

Other components which could be found in the Eclectic-Sufi are the extensive use of 'wine' and Buddhi worldly elements. Wine's use was proven figurative at times. At other times, however, it was denotatively encouraged and cherished. Furthermore, it was considered as "a way of joining with God" (Bassi, 2023, para. 01). In terms spirituality, New-Sufi representations were displayed in a way that resembles Buddhism. Like the Buddhi tradition, New-Sufi writings include notions like water, fire, wind, fire and void.

Last concept is that of silence as a medium for self-realisation. Silence has always been encouraged by traditional Sufis for its ability to offer a serene setting for moral and self-nourishing. For the New Sufis, it tends "to ignore the true essence of silence and just advises the readers to render in silence and focus on [themselves] and plan to make a strong comeback" (Mehdi, Hussain & Abdullah, 2021, p. 71).

1.4.4. Rumi and the 09/11 Crash !

Rumi's works have always received readership and popularity in the Orient. Yet, about three decades ago, the philosophy of the so-called Sufi guru witnessed an unprecedented fame in the Western nooks of the worlds. By and large, scholars argued that it is the change in the

overall political discourse which followed the famous incidents of 09-11 that paved the way for Rumi's name to widen its reach and to be able to touch the American literary market.

That event waged a black propaganda against Islam, yet on another scale, it ignited the spark of Rumi's 'appropriated' philosophy. This appropriation, however, is believed to be a redressing of the mystic's ideology, the thing that in its turn is also believed to be a re-dressing of Islam, taking off its original content and enrobing it with new-age modernized thoughts. This process is usually recognized as a re-evaluation, a re-reading, and also a re-Islamization of Islam, Sufism, and thus Jalal's works (Cihan-Artun, 2016). Its outcome is today recognized as The Rumi Phenomenon (Furlanetto, 2013). Such literary and spiritual phenomenon owes its existence to those who waged their works and shaped their translations in service for New Sufism.

1.4.5. The Rumi Phenomenon

In her paper on Rumi, Elena Furlanetto both displayed and explained the dimensions and leanings of the Rumi Phenomenon, especially in relation with, and with reference to, Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love.* According to her, it is all about the boom that Jalal El-Din Rumi was capable of racking up on the American literary arena, posthumously. This phenomenon, both literary and cultural, she states, started in the last turn of twentieth century when a good number of writers and translators waged their pens to engage in this trend of glorifying the so-called Rumi and the literary legacy he left behind (Furlanetto, 2013).

Verily, the trend that Rumi launched is not fortuitous. Rather, it is the outcome of an archaic culturally-oriented literary debate "between American literature and Sufi poetry" (Furlanetto, 2013, p. 202). Moreover, that glorification of Rumi was not actually for purely historical-based biographies. Rather, it was for fictionalized versions on the life, and the works, of the Sufi guru.

On the flip side, Amira El-Zein saw that the Rumi Phenomenon is more of a religious movement that came to feed the spiritual void in the American spirit. Bluntly, she claimed that the Rumi-mania is a "non a purely commercial, made in America's programme of spirituality, designed to fit the American hunger for spiritual guidance" (qtd in Furlanetto, 2013, p.203). She also claimed that it is based on New Age Sufism (El-Zein, 2000). On the same track, other researchers claimed that this phenomenon is a spiritual-oriented one, and that it is only used for "spiritual consumption in modern society" (Mehdi, Hussain & Abdullah, 2021, p.57).

While Furlanetto assumed that the Rumi trend is no more than a consequence to the literary friction that happened to be between Oriental writings and American ones, other researchers consider that it is the general atmosphere that the West witnessed during the twentieth century which lies behind the fame that Rumi gained at the time. Putting it differently, the revival of the latter's works was mainly because of the Western longing for a breeze of spirituality that would enliven their spirits that has long been wrecked and buried under the rubbles of industrialization and materialism. The Western passion for Rumi was, thus, born out of a need for re-engagement with nature and universe (Mehdi, Hussain & Abdullah, 2021).

In her research on the appropriation of Rumi in the West, Fatima B. Cihan-Artun, a researcher in the field of comparative literature, stated that "The surge of interest in Rumi has been precipitated by factors such as the receptive spirit of the American religious landscape and the promotion of Rumi by people, specifically from Turkey and Iran, as the antithesis of radical fundamentalists (Cihan-Artun, 2016, p.217). Putting it differently, it was a tool that has been used for the major purpose of filling what Jerome Clinton labelled as "'empty niche' in Americans' sensitivity, a 'need they didn't know they had' " (Furlanetto, 2013, p. 203).

Various writers took part in this literary and cultural miscellany. However, the path they chose to follow when writing and re-writing Rumi was quite similar as the majority of them recycled Jalal's works, giving life to 'Westernized' versions that are undressed of any Islamic references (Mehdi, Hussain & Abdullah, 2021). Even when Sufism was used in those writings, it was likely to be used as a free spiritual concept, apart from the religion of Islam (Sharghzadeh, 2021). Hence, such literary products are considered as part of 'New Sufism' (Mehdi, Hussain & Abdullah, 2021). In this respect, Furlanetto (2013) says:

> The Rumi phenomenon as a discourse on the 'Orient' produced in the West for the West, from which the 'Orient' itself (the place- and time- specific value of Rumi's poetry) has been completely left out – as if Rumi had 'migrated' from the Islamic tradition to Americanness, losing the relevance of the original Persian text on the way (p. 203).

Makers of 'New Sufism' are mostly translators that worked on carrying Sufi literature from the Persian side to the English one. Hammer, Arberry, Nicholson, William Chittick, Deepack chopra and Coleman Barks, to name but a few, are all samples of those New Sufists.

In contemporary Anglophone literature, Elif Shafak is considered as one of the faithful epigones contributing to this 'Sufi Phenomenon'. Through her previously mentioned work, she shaped the life and works of Rumi so as to cope with, and fit the needs and wants of, the Western literature worms (Furlanetto, 2013).

1.4.6. Elif Shafak: A Multicultural Bearer of Rumi's Heritage

One of those who spilled too much ink writing about Rumi was Elif Shafak. The would-be woman of letters was born is Strasbourg, France, to Nuri Bilgin -a psychologist- and Safak Atayman, a diplomat, a couple whose marital pathway arrived at a crossroad soon after giving birth to their unique child. Then, young Elif returned to Turkey with her mother whose job, demanding travelling every now and then, impelled her to keep the little girl with her traditional and illiterate grandmother. Verily, it is thanks to this hybrid and nomadic life that

world literature witnessed the birth of the Turkish outstanding novelist (Abrams, 2010). In one of her inspirational speeches on "The Power of Storytelling" for DLD (Digital-Life-Design) network, Elif said:

> I see myself as a creation of two women, two very different women. One of them is very well educated, westernized, modern, secular, and the feminist independent spirit, very urban. On the other hand, was my maternal grandmother. She was very traditional, spiritual, irrational, very superstitious, and less educated. Ans somehow, I grew up seeing these two very different kinds of womanhood and how they managed to coexist under the same roof, and the solidarity between them left an impact on me and on my writings (DLD Conference, 2013).

In another speech of her, titled "The Politics of Fiction" for TED, Elif claimed that she most of the time kept shuttling between countries (TED, 2010). As a matter of fact, she considers herself -her writings as well- as international and multicultural. Consequently, it is no surprise that her books were internationally celebrated, and that they were -still are- considered as literary threads linking the historically, culturally and politically conflicting worldwide 'duo', a notion that Elif does not appreciate because of the sense of division it carries (DLDconference, 2013). It is also worth mentioning that the writer's husband -a journalist and editor in chief in a journal meant for economic issues- had a hand in Shafak's success. When the writer gave birth to their two children, he was always ready for helping her, the thing that enabled her to write *Black Milk,* even though she was going through a postnatal depression and a risk of three years sentence because of her novel (Abrams, 2010).

Being a supporter of pluralism, a firm defender on human rights, a believer that differences enrich more than they separate, and that what gather people from all over the globe is more than what divide them, the novelist is believed to be one of the prominent ambassadors, qualified to carry on what Rumi called for through his writings. Throughout her *The Forty Rules of Love*, a work rife with New Age Sufi beliefs, the writer is also believed to have given a lot to the Rumi Phenomenon, a literary phenomenon that owes its existence to a number of other writers, most of whom are basically and initially translators as well.

In point of fact, *The Forty Rules of Love* is not the lone popular work of Shafak. The writer is recognised as today's most read novelist in Turkey. At the international scale, she is a well-known speaker, a bestseller and one of the most famous writers and social activists worldwide. Elif has a number of works tackling different themes and displaying different stories (Abrams, 2010).

Elif's first novel is titled *The Gaze* (2000). It is a prize-winning novel, in which she spoke about 'body image and desirability' (Goodreads, n.d.). Then, Elif wrote *The Flea Palace* in 2002. Four years later, she released the historiographic-fiction, titled, *The Bastard of Istanbul* after which she faced a trial being "accused of insulting "Turkishness" in her novel […] through a fictional character whose ancestors had been murdered in the Armenian genocide" (Abram, 2010, para. 01). Soon after that, Shafak also penned *Black Milk*, in 2007, in which she used her postnatal experience (Abrams, 2010). In 2010, the Turkish writer unveiled the aforementioned *The Forty Rules of Love*. Other works of her were *Honor* (2011), *The Architect's Apprentice* (2013), the tale of *The Girl Who Didn't Like Her Name* (2014), *38 Seconds in this World* (2019), and *The Island of the Missing Trees* (2021). Shafak received many awards and recognition certificates after such list, rich with mesmerizing literary masterpieces. Also, Elif took part as a jury member in many award-nomination events ("Elif Shafak's 2022 Biography", n.d.)

Back to her seminal novel, *The Forty Rules of Love*, Shafak claimed that her work would not have been fulfilled without catching a deep glimpse at literary products belonging to prominent authors like Refik Algan, Schimmel, Idris Shah, Nicholson, William Chittick, Franklin D. Lewis, Coleman Barks, as well as Kabir and Camille Helminski. In other words, the nested story that Elif introduced stands as an extract that the writer came up with after thoroughly reading works of different translators who are actually part of that exceptional Western enthusiasm and fascination with the so-called Rumi, known as Rumi-Mania.

1.4.7. The Rumi-Mania

Rumi gone, yet his soul kept drifting in the universal literary arena, thanks to a wide legion of translators who devoted their pens for translating his works. In sooth, it is the trend of translating Jalal's works and biographies that was actually labelled Rumi-mania, a term that the renowned translator Coleman Barks has coined to describe the extent to which the Western literary market was demented with Rumi (Cihan-Artun, 2006). The latter owes much of his success in the West to such translators, amply fascinated with the Sufi guru. In this regard, El-Zein argued that two different streams are going to be spotted if we throw an eye over the content and the quality of these translations which varied whenever the approach changed. The streams are mainly either academic or non-academic (also referred to as the New Sufi Approach) (El-Zein, 2000).

Generally, writers-translators who are recognized as academic carriers of Rumi are those who kept the Islamic touch in their English versions. Hence, the word academic here stands for them being, to a certain extent, faithful to the Islamic leanings of originals (El-Zein, 2000). Those who are said to belong to this strain are also part of the 'Rumi Studies' field, which also includes academic works and research about Sufism (Cihan-Artun, 2016). It is worth noting that even among those who claimed to belong to the scholarly type of translators, there are many whose translations are not compatible with original texts. This can be explained knowing that source texts, based on which translations have been conducted, were in such cases already target texts in English and European languages which others translated from their original languages. On the other front, those who belong to the non-academic (New Sufi) team are those who introduced 'modernized' works of Rumi that are empty of any Islamic leanings (El-Zein, 2000).

Hammer is considered as the initiator among those who are part of the academic team of translations. Other names that went through the same path are Georg Rosen, Sir James

Redhouse, H. Winfield, Nicholson and his student Arberry, Annemarie Schimmel, W. Theakston and William Chittik. Each of those writers have translated specific works of Rumi. While Redhouse translated the *Mathnawi,* Arberry worked on *Fihi Ma Fihi*, re-titling it as *The Discourses*, as well as on poetical pieces from the *Diwan of Rumi.* The formerly mentioned works, *Diwan* and *Mathnawi*, have also been translated by Chittick while *The Discourses* was translated by Theakston. On the same arena, Schimmel gave birth to her 1979's work, titled *Triumphal Sun*, in which she endeavoured to explore Rumi's Gnosticism and literary style (Mehdi, Hussain & Abdullah, 2021).

The New Age league of writers comprised writers-translators like John Moyne, Deepack Chopra, Fereydoun Kia, Robert Bly and the most famous, most read: Coleman Barks! In fact, works of this group of writers are widely acknowledged in the West as they are more of Westernized versions, reflecting the Western world. Not only they stripped the Islamic spirit from originals but these translations did not also convey the messages that originals delivered. Some viewed that this was because those translations were based on already translated works, the thing that made it a logical result that meaning was lost in translation.

Others considered that such translated writings have been mistranslated on purpose, and that the changes in those resulting works were meant to be done by their writer, for the sake of acknowledgement and fame. In this vein, Deepack Chopra (1988) -with Kia- has once claimed that the translated versions of Rumi "are not direct translations, but 'moods' that [they] have captured as certain phrases radiated from the original Farsi, giving life to a new creation but retaining the essence of its source" (qtd in Mehdi, Hussain & Abdullah, 2021, p.67). In a similar manner, Robert Bly expressed his firm support to "the oversimplification over contextualization of the Rumi's works" claiming that "These poems must be freed from their cages" (qtd in Mehdi, Hussain & Abdullah, 2021, p.67).

1.5. Shafak's Rumi Makers: A Multifaceted Journey of Translations

As it has been previously mentioned, the version of Rumi that Elif introduced in *The Forty Rules of Love* was based on a number of other authors' works upon Sufism and its major figures (Shafak, 2010). Hence, getting glimpses at those translators' philosophies in translation enables identifying Shafak's place in the Rumi literary market. As a matter of fact, an overview about each one of the authors that Elif Shafak claimed to have used their works is provided in this section. Samples and comparisons are also provided.

1.5.1. Idris Shah

All astonishment upon the multiculturality of Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* is cleared up once getting well-informed upon the miscellaneous background of writers, East and West, from which she was packaged once she engaged in her writing journey about Sufism. Besides Turkish, German, and American authors, Shafak also benefitted from reading works of Idris Shah (Shafak, 2010), an Afghan-Indian fan of the Sufi culture. The latter was a teacher of Sufism, a translator and a writer who penned a number of successful books which have been translated into many languages.

Shah's views upon the matter were believed to be 'universal', a notion that ran the contents of his books. The writer believed that there is no such thing as a static Sufism. Rather, the Sufi culture evolves and alters not only under the influence of time and place, but also with people's alterations. These vies that Idris held cannot stem from the same source as Islam. In fact, the Afghan-Indian writer claimed to be a firm believer that Islam postdate Sufism, and thus it is feasible that the former and the latter break up (Who was Idris Shah? , n.d.). Such views may explain the popularity that Idris Shah's works gained in the West.

1.5.2. Coleman Barks

Another author whose writings have been used by Shafak was Coleman Barks (Shafak, 2010). In fact, Artun argued that Rumi and his Sufi philosophy were introduced to the modern Western reader mainly through the lenses of Orientalists, amongst whom is Barks. Artun believed in "the intellectual guidance of European Orientalists" which Coleman and his fellow translators used in the interpretation of "Sufism as an extra-Islamic tradition moulded with pantheistic and Aryan characteristics" (2016, p.119). Barks' versions, consequently, were marked by the presence of elements from the pantheistic and Aryan cultures, besides Hindu and Zen notions.

Barks' translations of Rumi's works are considered to have initiated the initial sparks of 'The Rumi Phenomenon' in the American literary field. This is due the success of his 1995's book, *The Essential Rumi*, inside of which he laid his own versions of the Persian poet's poems. This book is believed both to have urged, and paved the way for, other authors and translators to reach out a wide audience already admiring the Persian poet and mystic and thirsty for knowing more about him and reading more of his works (Furlanetto, 2013). In this vein, Franklin Lewis proclaimed that "it is Coleman Barks who, more than any other single individual, is responsible for Rumi's current fame" (qtd in Cihan-Artun, 2016, p. 117).

1.5.2.1. Domestication-Oriented Translations of Barks

The translations that Barks provided world literature with have been disputable ever since their creation. The first thing, based on which those versions were accused for lacking accuracy, is the de-Islamization of several works of Jalal-Din Rumi (Cihan-Artun, 2016). Besides this, the linguistic taming stands as an additional checkbox that could be ticked for being one of the options to be taken into account when judging Barks' translations for being misleading and erroneous (Furlanetto, 2013).

1.5.2.1.1. De-Islamisation and Religious Domestication

Barks is well known for stripping Rumi's works out of their religious context. In this respect, Furlanetto stated that "Barks domesticated his material by expunging essential references to Islamic doctrine that might have come across as too intricate to the American reader" (Furlanetto, 2013, p.203). In other words, the researcher thinks that Rumi's originals were full of religious terms and conceptions that would have hardened their reception among Americans. This might be the reason why, she explained, Barks took off the Islamic identity from Jalal's works.

Rumi, as imagined by Barks, is a universal figure, able to fit into any culture, and capable of being embraced by people from different backgrounds. Barks also thinks that defining Rumi's religious background would be confining to him, as well as to his works. Based on that, he introduced his secular-like versions, endeavouring to sketch a universal image of the Persian poet (Cihan-Artun, 2016).

1.5.2.1.2. Linguistic Domestication

Barks' works were not of a sophisticated linguistic structure, as his writings were only meant to make clear and comprehensive the already translated poems of Rumi. Mostly, the process of translation he adopted was intra-lingual, from archaic to modern English. In cases like this, it should be noted that Coleman did not take into account that "The original text was not taken into consideration" (Furlanetto, 2013, p. 203). The aim, therefore, was not providing English literature with novel texts. Rather, the goal was mainly to domesticate (Cihan-Artun, 2016).

Persian remained obscure to Barks, regarding his inability to read, write, or even to understand this language. In this regard, Cihan-Artun said that the American born translator only used " 'literal, scholarly transcriptions' of the poems, which he either receives from his

Persian-speaking friend John Moyne, a professor emeritus of linguistics, or from scholarly translations such as those of Nicholson and Arberry, who are not given credit on the cover of the book" (2016, p. 17). Yet, Coleman kept translating Rumi's poems using already translated sources. Doing so, he eliminated every Sufi or Islamic linguistic sign in those works, with an explicit aim of freeing them from any religious constraint, and an implicit goal of 'domesticating for reaching' out to the minds and tastes of Westerners who were mostly brainwashed regarding Muslims and Islam (Furlanetto, 2013).

Even the physical format of Jalal's poems witnessed some changes. Those edits have Americanized Rumi's poems which they took the free-verse structure. That was actually an additional tactic that Barks adopted to insert those Sufi poems into the American arena (Cihan-Artun, 2016).

1.5.2.1.3. Sample Translations by Barks

To have an idea about Barks' philosophy in translation when it comes to Rumi's works, a sample from his 1999's *Open Secret,* a co-authored work that he penned collaboratively with John Moyne, is provided. In the previously mentioned work of the two, a poem titled "Strange Business" unfolded as such:

If you don't have a woman that lives with you, why aren't you looking?
If you have one, why aren't you satisfied?
You have no resistance to your friend, why don't you become the Friend?
If the flute is too quiet to say, teach it manners.
Someone's holding you back, break off.
You sit here for days saying, this is strange business.
You're the strange business.
You have the energy of the sun in you,
But you keep knotting it up at the base of your spine.
You're some weird kind of gold that wants to stay melted
In the furnace, so you won't have to be coins.
*Say **ONE** in your lonesome house.*

Loving two is hiding inside yourself.
You've gotten drunk on so many kinds of wine.
Taste this. It won't make you wild.
It's fire.
Give up, if you don't understand by this time
That your living is firewood.
This wave of talking builds.
Better we should not speak it, but let it grow within.
(Moyne & Barks, 1999, p. 71)

Research unveiled that the translation of the same poem is not based on Rumi's original text. Rather, it was re-scripted based on the 397's poem in Arberry's second selection of *Mystical Poems of Rumi* (1991). The poem in the latter's book is considered as the closest in meaning to the Persian version (Kaynat, n.d.), and it goes the following way:

If you have no beloved, why do you not seek one ?
*And if you have attained the **B**eloved, why do you not rejoice ?*
If the companion is not complaint, why do you not become him ?
If the rebec wails not, why do you not teach it manner?s
If an Abu Jahl is a veil to you, why do you not attack Abu Lahab ?
You sit idly saying: "This is a strange business"
You are the strange one not to desire such such a strange one
You are the sun of the world. Why are you black at heart ?
See that you do not any more have the desire for the knot
Like gold you are prisoner in the furnace
So that you may not be covetous of the purse of gold
*Since **U**nity is the bachelors' chamber of those who say "One"*
Why do you not make your spirit a bachelor to all but God ?
Have you ever seen Majnun have affection with two Leylis ?
Why not only desire one face and one chin ?
There is such a moon in hiding in the night of your being
Why do you not pray and petition at midnight?
Though you are an ancient drunkard and not new to the wine
God's wine does not suffer you to make turmoil

My wine is the fire of love,
Especially from the hand of God;
May life be unlawful to you,
Since you do not make your life firewood
Though the way of discourse is surging,
Yet it is better that you should expound it with heart and soul
Not with lips
(Arberry, 1991, p. 142)

A quick look over the two versions reveals the huge difference in meaning that the two pieces deliver. Barks version is way far from what Rumi seems to have intended to say. Religious names besides references to God in Arberry's version are all left out in the former's interpretation. Apart from this, however, the skeleton of the poem, the other words' choice, appears to have similarities in the two pieces. Notwithstanding, meaning remains totally different between them both.

In her doctoral dissertation, Fatima B. Cihan-Artun conducted a study upon Barks' translations of Rumi. For its fulfilment, she selected *Mathnawi*'s translated content in Barks' *The Essential Rumi* (1995) as a case study. Her choice fell upon the previously mentioned work of Jalal as it is the most spiritual in terms of content and lexicology, the thing that qualified its religious domestication not only to be targeted but also to be easily spotted in its alleged counterpart on the parallel side (Cihan-Artun, 2016).

One example that the researcher used for the purpose of analysing and observing such modifications was the translation of "Let Him who Desires to Sit with God sit with the Sufis", one of Rumi's poems in *Mathnawi*. As a -faithful to original- translation, she picked Nicholson's one:

When you have fled (for refuge) to the Qur'an of God,
You have mingled with the spirit of the prophets.
The Qur'an is (a description of) the states of the prophets,
(who are) the fishes of the holy sea of (Divine) Majesty.
And if you read and do not accept (take to heart) the Qur'an,
Suppose you have seen the prophets and saints (what will that avail you?);
But if you are accepting (the Qur'an),
When you read the stories (of the prophets), the bird, your soul, will be distressed in its cage.
The bird that is a prisoner in a cage,
(If it) is not seeking to escape, 'tis from ignorance.
The spirits which have escaped from their cages are the prophets, (those) worthy guides.
From without comes their voice, (telling) of religion, (and crying),
"This, this is the way of escape for thee.
By this we escaped from this narrow cage: there is no means of escape from this cage but this way,
(That) thou shouldst make thyself ill, exceedingly wretched,
In order that thou mayst be let out from (the cage of) reputation."
Worldly reputation is a strong chain:
In the Way how is this less than a chain of iron?
(Cihan-Artun, 2016, p.150-151)

The poem above speaks about the notion of freedom through the scope of Islam. For this, the poet inserted religious and spiritual words, including 'prophets' and most importantly '*Quran'*. God's messengers and *Quran* are presented as mediators and guides for those who are seeking freedom (Cihan-Artun, 2016).

Barks tried to give his own interpretation of the same poem. It unfolded as such:

A great joy breaks free of the self
And joins the moving river of presence.
Read about prophetic states
And let your soul grow restless in confinement.
Stay close to those who have managed to escape.
Don't do anything to make people applaud.
That shuts the cage door tighter
(Cihan-Artun, 2016, p. 151)

The modifications that the American poet introduced made of the piece under the spot more of a version then a simple interpretation. In fact, the poem is mostly stripped away, not only from its religious template but also from its original meaning. The notion of freedom was presented in a universalized form, with no reference to religion; and even though 'prophetic' was mentioned, it was by no means specified to Islamic prophethood (Cihan-Artun, 2016).

1.5.3. R. A. Nicholson

Another author whose works upon Rumi caught the attention of Elif Shafak was Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, an English writer, translator, and Cambridge professor. The latter was actually a trailblazer when it comes to speaking about Rumi and the Sufi reputation in the West, due to the numerous works, about the previously mentioned two, that he provided the English readers with ("About R.A. Nicholson and his Translation and Commentary on the *Masnavi*", n.d.).

Nicholson released many books on the matter. Unlike many of his colleagues, he translated into English texts that were originally scripted in the Arabic, Persian, and even the Ottoman-Turkish, languages. Therefore, his works were the foundation over which other English translators, attempting to take part around the Sufi table, built their own translations, amongst whom was his student A. J. Arberry. Reynold's seminal work, however, was the commentary that he penned over Rumi's *Mathnawi* in 1985, titled, *The Mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi, Commentary* ("About R.A. Nicholson and his Translation and Commentary on the Masnavi", n.d.).

Nicholson's translations were, overall, qualified to be considered literal translations. His works kept the religious spirit in Rumi's poetry, in contradiction to those who claimed to have used his translations as a reference for their versions, like Coleman Barks. In her research, Cihan-Artun compared a set of 'modified' translations with literal ones. For this, she used

Nicholson's interpretations, which she considers literal, and Barks' versions as samples from the opposite strain. One of the Nicholson's poems of Rumi, that she used, went the following way:

Beseech God continually that you may not stumble over these deep
sayings and that you may arrive at the end,
For many have been led astray by the Qur'án: by (clinging to) that rope a
multitude have fallen into the well
There is no fault in the rope, O perverse man, in as much as you had no
desire for the top
(qtd in Cihan-Artun, 2016, p. 152)

"The Well of Sacred Text" was the title that Barks chose for his own version of the same verses above, which unfolded the following way:

Don't fall down the well of scripture
use the words to keep moving
Thousands are trapped in the Qur'an
and the Bible, holding to a rope
It's not the rope's fault.
Let the well rope pull you out.
Then let the well rope go"
(qtd in Cihan-Artun, 2016, p. 152)

Differences between the two bundles of lines have actually exemplified the differences betwixt the conflicting schools in charge of the Rumi affaire. Remarkable dissimilarities between the two pieces above could be spotted. Nicholson's translation clearly paid respect to the Islamic spirit of the original. *Quran* was described as a helping hand, capable of assisting people's will inside the well, and outside of it. This assistance, however, depends on people's will and the way they intend to use that rope, which referred to *Quran* (Cihan-Artun, 2016).

On the opposite scale, however, Barks added the term 'Bible', a word that had no existence in the original version, neither in term nor in sense. Additionally, there was no reference to the exact meaning that the word 'rope' carried in Coleman's poem; it was left ambiguous. Even in case one considers its meaning to be the same as that of Nicholson's literal translation, in which 'rope' stood for '*Quran'*, the meaning of the whole piece would change. In other words, if the rope is understood as *Quran* in Barks' version, then the poem would include a call for letting the sacred book go, the thing that totally opposes what a Muslim can say or even think of, let alone if that Muslim was a committed preacher like Rumi (ibid).

1.5.4. Annemarie Schimmel

In her masterwork, Elif Shafak has also declared that she benefited from her readings of the different works of Annemarie Schimmel. The latter is a German born scholar and translator, who has been raised in a literary environment and was surrounded by literature since her babyhood. Once Rumi's *Diwan* was introduced to her, Annemarie fell for the Sufi poet and immediately embarked into a journey throughout Sufism and Islamic mysticism. Qua Indo-Islamic culture enthusiast, the German professor gave several lectures on Islam, and crowned her rich career with a doctoral thesis on the concept of the mystical leanings of love in relation to Islam (Assani et al., 2004).

Annemarie penned many books which fall into the spiritual column, amongst which were her 1975's *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, and her 1990's *Islam: An Introduction,* to name but a few. On Rumi, she wrote *Triumphal Sun* in 1979, in which she tackled "Rumi's imagery and theology" (Mehdi, Hussein & Abdullah, 2021, p. 67), and in 2001 she published *Rumi's World: The Life and Works of the Greatest Sufi Poet* where she celebrated Jalal and his prodigious writings. However, Schimmel's favourite hobby was translating mystical poetry, she reported.

It is noteworthy to point out that Schimmel visited Turkey repeatedly. Moreover, she also gave public lectures in the Turkish language. Furthermore, she also worked as a professor at the university of Harvard; and although she was a non-Muslim woman, she was greatly received by Orientals, highly respected and deeply cherished by everyone. As a matter of fact, the German scholar was granted many awards (Asani et al., 2004).

Schimmel did not only translate Rumi, but also, she inspected others' translations of the Sufi sage. When Coleman Barks released his versions of Jalal's works, she harshly criticized them for lacking authenticity. Furthermore, she labelled them 'second-hand translations' belonging to secondary literature. Such harsh criticism was, she justified, because Barks' translations were void of every possible Islamic fingerprint that originals were full of (Cihan-Artun, 2016). Schimmel did not criticise Barks apart from others, rather, her criticism was addressing all Western translators who attempted to falsify the religiosity that Rumi's originals carried. In this vein, she stated:

> There has been an increasing tendency among Western scholars and, even more, lovers and admirers of *Mawlana* [Jalaluddin Rumi] to forget the deeply Islamic background of his poetry. Did not Jami call his *Mathnawi 'the Qur'an* in the Persian tongue'!? Modern people tried to select from often very vague second-hand translations only those verses that speak of love and ecstasy, of intoxication and whirling dance. The role that the Prophet of Islam plays in *Mawlana*'s poetry is hardly mentioned in secondary literature. But whosoever has listened with understanding to the na`t-i sharif, that introductory musical piece at the very beginning of the *Mevlevi* ["Whirling Dervish"] ceremonies, feels, nay rather knows, how deep the poet's love for the Prophet Muhammad was, which is expressed in his words (qtd in Cihan-Artun, 2016, p. 153).

In 2003, Schimmel died leaving a legacy of valuable and well-appreciated writings upon Sufism and Islam (Asani et al., 2004).

1.5.5. Franklin Lewis

Franklin D. Lewis was one of the major writers who poured so much ink upon Rumi. His works caught the attention of, and were used by, Elif Shafak. Besides being a writer, he was a prominent researcher and translator who devoted many of his research for digging into

Persian Literature, surfing throughout the lives of its pillars, unveiling the mysteries of Sufism and mystic literary products, and translating works like those of Jalal-Din Rumi. Verily, it was his research on the Sufi guru, titled *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West, The Life Teachings of Jalāl al-Din Rumi* (2008), which marked his career. According to Paul Losensky, an American professor specialized in Comparative Literature, Lewis's previously mentioned book is actually a "touchstone for any future research on Rumi and has been translated into Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Danish … His articles and chapters contribute to collected volumes, and offer insights into other major figures in the classical tradition such as Ferdowski, Sa'di and Hāfez" (qtn in Patterson, 2020, para. 02).

1.5.6. Kebir Helminski

His journey throughout the mysteries of Sufism was marked by the production of numerous works, the thing that had a hand in enabling the Sufi ideology and traditions to have a world of literature of their own. In 1980, he founded one of the most important publishing houses which are specifically oriented to publishing Sufi works. In 1990, he was elected to be on top of 'the mevlevi order of Sufism'. In 2001, he managed to take part, as a lecturer, at Harvard school of Divinity. About eight years later, he occupied a place on a list that named five hundred Muslim figures that were considered as the most influential ("Kabir Edmund Helminski", n.d.).

This author is known for being a prominent activist in the Sufi circle for the multiple services he offered to Sufism ("Kabir Edmund Helminski", n.d.). First, he created the 'Threshold Society' , "a non-profit educational foundation with the purpose of facilitating the experience of Divine Unity, Love, and Truth in the world" ("The Threshold Society", 2022, para.01). This organization was founded on Sufi rules and beliefs inspired from the philosophies of prominent teachers like Jalal-Din Rumi. It is concerned with the introduction

of different *Quranic* interpretations, that have been introduced by Sufi gurus, through talks, conferences, and trainings (ibid).

Also, Kabir Helminski gave birth to many Sufi books. In his 1992's *Living Presence: A Sufi Way to Mindfulness and the Essential Self,* he introduced the notion of presence, with relation to self and wisdom ("Sufism is a Centuries-Old Spiritual Psychology", n.d.). In *Holistic Islam: Sufism, Transformation, and the Needs of Our Time (1997),* he provided criticism of a number of contemporary issues facing Islam, tried to involve Sufi maxims into modern days matters, and urged to embracing a spirituality that copes with the contemporary life ("Islam Once Gave Birth", n.d.).

In 1999, Helminski released *The Knowing Heart: A Sufi Path of Transformation* in which he spoke about the separating line between the spiritual and the material, which also stands as a link via which these two worlds meet. That line is known as 'The Knowing Heart', and Sufism, according to him, plays the same role as it (Helminski, 1999). Another work of his was the recently published: *In the House of Remembering, The Living Tradition of Sufi Teaching* (2020) in which he sheltered a number of Sufi talks on "developing intention, will, awareness, awakening our capacities for love, reducing the domination of ego, honouring the masters, saints, and prophets that have gone before" (Mostafa, 2022, para. 01).

Helminski has also translated a number of works on Sufism which have been reproduced in more than eight different tongues. In 2013, he collaborated with his wife, to release *Rumi Daylight*, a book that comprised numerous translations of poems from Rumi's *Mathnawi*. According to him, *Rumi Daylight* has displayed Rumi's "spiritual teachings concisely and comprehensively, in a translation that touches heart and mind" (Helminski, 2013, p.02).

1.5.7. Camille Helminski

Wife of the previously introduced writer, Camille Hamilton Adams Helminski not only shares marital life with Kabir, but also the literary and the professional ones. Besides co-authoring literary works like *Rumi Daylight,* she co-founded the 'Threshold Society' along with her husband, and took part in the *Mevlevi* order. Her main focus was to bring to the fore Muslim women and their paramount religious and spiritual roles. She is a chief in Women's Initiative in Islamic Spirituality and Equality (abbreviated as WISE), an organisation advocating women, and an active member in 'Spiritual Paths Foundation' ("Kabir Edmund Helminski", 2022).

Camille is believed to be the first woman to translate a good number of *Quranic* verses. She individually wrote *Women of Sufism: A Hidden Treasure, Stories and Writings of Mystic Poets, Scholars, and Saints,* in which she traced "the luminous presence of women who follow the 'Sufi Way' - the mystical path of Islam-" (Helminski, 2013, p.02). Also, she wrote for 'The Book Foundation' ("Kabir Edmund Helminski", 2022). The latter is an organization which works on dusting off traditional stereotypes about Islamic thoughts and principles through several activities including the publication of books sharing and supporting Islam's cosmic teachings and messages (Helminski & Henry & Henzell-Thomas, n.d.).

Camille also authored and edited *The Book of Character: Writings on Virtue and Character from Islamic and Other Sources* in 2004. Throughout its pages, she endeavoured to hand universal readers with a bundle of virtues which actually form the kernel of Islam. Those virtues were unfolded through the presentation of stories of important Muslim figures, with the aim of emphasizing both the universality and eternality of Islam (Helminski, 2004). Besides that, the mystic writer penned *The Book of Nature: A Sourcebook of Spiritual Perspectives on Nature and the Environment*, which is considered as a reminder of He who owns the divine power over nature with its four elements. This work not only tackles nature,

but also the role that humans play in it. It is marked by the use of *Quranic* verses and different literary genres including poetical lines (Helminski, 2006).

1.5.8. Refik Algan

Another author from the chain of the Sufi devotees that Elif used for penning her novel is the Turkish contemporary author Refik Algan (Shafak, 2010). Like the other figures that Shafak used, Algan was not only writing about Sufism but also translating works belonging to the Sufi circle, both from Turkish into English, and from English into Turkish as well ("Refik Algan", n.d.). The most prominent of his works on Sufism was the book he co-translated with his colleague Camille Helminski, titled *Rumi's Sun: The Teachings of Shams of Tabriz* (2008), an account that narrates the life of Rumi's favourite companion Shams of Tabriz and the way the latter influenced the former (Algan & Helminski, 2009). Rafik and Helminski shared similar views regarding the literary and philosophical blaze that Sufism continues to kindle. Hence, the previously mentioned book was not the only work which gathered the two Sufism's enthusiasts.

1.5.9. William Chittick

William Clark Chittick is an American born professor, specialized in Persian Literature and Language. The first sight that the researcher had on Sufism was during his stay at the American university of Beirut where he also met Seyyed Hossein Nasr, an Iranian professor known for knowledgeability in the topic. Ever since their encounter, Sufism occupied the main focus of Chittick's interest. Among his important works in the area were his articles, titled "Sufism", "Rumi, Jalāl-al-Din vii. Philosophy" and "The *Quran* and Sufism", his translations of several Persian works, as well as his books on Sufi and Islamic figures like Rumi, Shams of Tabriz and Ibn Arabi (Phara & Rustom, n.d.). In her 2012's masterpiece, Shafak claimed that Chittick's *The Autobiography of Shams e-Tabrizi* (2004) was one of the

sources she "benefited greatly from" (p.355) when writing *The Forty Rules of Love* (Shafak, 2010).

1.6. Conclusion

New Sufism, also known as Eclectic Sufism, is part of the 'Modern Muslim Subjectivities Project' (MMSP). It is regarded to as a reconciliation that came for the purpose of punching a window for Islam in the field of Modern Subjectivities using the 'tool' of domestication. This religious domestication had its social and political warranties. Also, it had its own advertising modes. Rumi -his philosophy, works, and even his relatives as well as his life- have been reshaped, Westernized, or even Americanized! Besides that, they were used as a good advertisement for the 'New Age Sufi' propaganda. The resulting outcome of this plan appeared through the birth of 'The Rumi Phenomenon', a Western fascination with a (domesticated) Muslim poet, teacher, and preacher. Elif Shafak took place in the previously mentioned literary and spiritual phenomenon through *The Forty Rules of Love*, a novel that became her seminal for the appreciation and popularity it received East and West. Her work could be identified as part of 'New Sufism' regarding the authors she claimed to have used to come up with her own version of Rumi, most of whom are non-academic translators whose writings upon Rumi are full of spiritual domestication and linguistic falsification.

Chapter Two

Multi-Layered and Multi-Voiced: Narratological Brands in Light of Postmodernism

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2.5. Conclusion

2.1. Introduction

By the dawn of the twentieth century, the human identity witnessed a drastic change. In the period that followed, few decades along the 'modern epoch', where postmodern age is confined, change transcended the actual world and was transferred to the literary one (Wollam, 2008). The wind of change that postmodernism came up with to literature, therefore, was nothing but an extension to artistic, anthropological and philosophical alterations, as well as to linguistic shifts (Shankar BK, 2019).

Such changes were the logical response to the happenings that took over the twentieth century, an eon known for diplomatic turmoil, switches of political powers, scientific revolution, economic fluctuations, and spiritual despair. The world's bloodiest couple of wars did not turn out to be the final chapters in the history of international conflicts; another cold war was yet to shuffle official relations, putting the world under the grasp of American hands. It is amidst this turmoil that 'Hiroshima and Nagasaki' bombings were executed. As a consequence to all those conflicts that the world had undergone, Postcolonialism appeared as a field concerned with delving into the legacies of colonialism, and interests in tackling history and war-related topics increased.

After a firm rejection of industrialization and its creations at the first half of twentieth century, technology was finally embraced. Likewise, fragmentation was accepted being an inevitable mess that everybody has to learn how to deal with in a lawless world and chaotic times (Purba, 2021). Twentieth century also witnessed an ideological split between believers and those who had no faith in God and all supreme powers, especially after that Charles Darwin's theories on the evolution of species proliferated (Karwa, 2019). All the previously mentioned background has shaped the final look with which postmodernism was introduced, then, postmodernism, per se, gave the different fields its own touch, and literature was no exception.

Postmodernism blessed the world with unprecedented marvellous literary works. Besides the historical background which both enriched and enamelled writers' authoring capabilities and horizons, the reason why postmodernism was fancied lies in the freedom that it offered to literature makers whose aesthetic creations have long been encaged into the fence of traditional penning modes and streams. Such circumstances enriched creativity and marked the birth of novel ways of writing, both in terms of format and content. Hence, the novel - preserving its place as the most popular genre in literature- kept evolving through the era, thanks to its welcoming and embodiment of a number of features and devices that gave it a brand-new shape which could fit with those changes that the postmodern age witnessed. Those features comprised pastiche, temporal distortion, paranoia and alienation, techno-culture and hyperreality, magical realism, irony and dark humour, ideological deconstruction, relativism and dualism, intertextuality, metafiction and historiographic metafiction.

As a logical consequence to that, narrative structures have also been influenced, and devices that have already been introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin went more and more popular starting from the fifties of the previous century. Stories were set into layers and through multiple voices, mono-narration monopoly was repealed, historic representations were open to subjective (re)telling, and fiction turned into a self-reflexive metafiction.

Throughout the following pages of this research, such narrative techniques would be scrutinized in light of postmodernism. For this, the present chapter is going to be divided into two parts. The first one would introduce the postmodern age, its main features and loops, and the manner throughout which it influenced postmodern writings. Then, in its second part, the chapter is going to delve into embedding and polyphony, being among the most striking narratological techniques that the changes of the time revived.

PART -I-

Blurring the Lines and Drawing New Designs: Historiographic Metafiction as a Postmodern Instrument to (Re)Telling History and Life Stories

Postmodernism is recognized as a period in which a number of literary elements were employed. Many features and theories marked this age due to the different updates that it witnessed. However, this section emphasizes the ones which have been recognized in selected works of Nabila Akbar and other scholars. Also, the same part introduces metafiction and self-reflexivity to pave the way for historiographic-metafiction to be scrutinized.

2.2. Literature and the Postmodern Age

While a legion of researchers identifies postmodernism as a time whose features are a World War upshot, others still discuss its nature (Shankar BK, 2019). In other words, when it comes to defining postmodernism, three categories can be distinguished; the first one is that of those who claim that postmodernism is an age, and therefore a period. Second tranche, however, holds that it is a theory, or an epistemology. In this vein, Leonie E. Jennings and Anne P. Graham, Australian researchers, say that:

> The question of whether the term, postmodern, reflects a 'period' or an 'epistemology' underpins current debates and remains problematic. The former view makes ontological claims about the changing nature of society whilst the latter view makes claims about the nature of knowledge itself (qtd in Shankar BK, 2019, p.09).

On another front, a third category sees that postmodernism is actually nothing but a "position" where "anything goes" (Jenning & Graham, 1996, p. 270). This third view is mainly held and cherished by neutrality proponents, and opponents of absolutism (Jennings & Graham, 1996). When it comes to the literary world, it is identified as a period, a theory, and a position, altogether. It is also a stream of thinking, and a universe characterized by being both controlling and controlled; controlling, the way it set the features according to which

new writing versions proliferated in response to the changes that humankind underwent, and controlled, the way its makers went back to bow to those same criteria when giving birth to their literary babies.

2.2.1. Modernism Vs Postmodernism

Various definitions have been provided to the postmodern age. However, one thing that a wide range of researchers and historians agreed upon was that it cannot be defined and scrutinized apart from its precedent reverse; i.e. modernism (Karwa, 2019). In point of fact, many researchers consider that modernism is not a movement to be jumped over to get to postmodernism, neither it is a specific period in time whose ending launches the other school. Nevertheless, almost the same scholars keep arguing that modernism is a school that should be well studied by postmodernists who also think that most of what was introduced by the movement that they claim they belong to is a foundation over which the postmodern thinking resides (Raja, 2019).

Modernism is a school that took grasp of the philosophical, literary, cultural and social fields during the period located between the second part of the nineteenth century and the first half of the following one (Bedard, 2020). It was characterized by a number of features, some of which were rejected later on by the postmodern school, and others which continued their evolution journey under the umbrella of postmodernism. Modernism was known for formalism, absurdity, symbolism, individualism, experimentation. Formalism in modern writings paid massive attention to form rather than content. Absurdity was a consequence of the chaotic life that the world witnessed at the time. It was expressed through the creation of absurd plots and the appearance of ‘the theatre of the absurd’. In its turn, symbolism was very common in modern literature. Although it existed before, its use witnessed changes during the modern age in terms of complexity and interpretations. Individualism was captured throughout an emphasis on individuals, while experimentation was spotted throughout the use

of ‘stream of consciousness’, for example, which delved inside of those individuals’ leading their thoughts to be penned (J , 2023).

Modernists and postmodernists set different goals when they laid their ideas, and thus, their inquiries were dissimilar. While the former league showed a lust for truth-discovery, the latter based their writings upon existential questions which are more of ontological nature (Raja, 2019). Also, while modernist spoke about the change happening in their time with agony and distress, postmodernists accepted those changes and tackled them with peace and acceptance (Nuri, 2013). Unlike modernists, postmodernists consider that there is no such thing as a single reality. Instead, they firmly believe that anything in life is open to interpretations. Hence, reality is not objective; rather, it is manifolded (Raja, 2019). Likewise, no firm truths or conclusion can be made upon values or any conception that is part of any discipline. Uncertainty and stability are excluded. In this respect, Forghani, Keshtiaray and Yousefy, a number of researchers, claimed:

> While modernism emphasizes realities and the discovery of realities, postmodernism emphasizes the instability of everything and the creation of realities. Modernism believes in certainty, necessity and meta-narrative, while, in postmodernist view, under no circumstances should any mention of these categories be made. Particularly in the area of values, moralities, politics, and education no mention should be made of universal and constant theoretical foundations. Values are relative things that differ from culture to culture (2015, p. 98).

2.2.2. Introduction to Postmodern Tools and Loops

Postmodernism appeared as a Post-World-Wars baby. It grew up steadily during the second half of the twentieth century. It was a school that firmly rejected traditional thinking. At times, it even tackled conventional works with irony, as an alternative way throughout which they were expressing their refusal to kneeling to “long-held beliefs regarding objective reality, value systems, human nature, and social progress, among other things” (Bedard, 2020, para. 06). In fact, identifying the exact characteristics and theories of postmodern writing is

not an easy task regarding the existing intersections between this school and the one that flourished before it (Nuri, 2013). However, the following section endeavours to lay out a set of the major shifting elements of postmodernism, upon which researchers and theorists agreed.

2.2.2.1. Pastiche

As its name denotes, pastiche is all about pasting different literary styles in one work of literature. It is a postmodern criterion that came as a performance and as an appreciation of the chaos that characterized the second half of the twentieth century. In point of fact, pastiche is intertextual in spirit as it usually is used as an "homage to or a parody of past styles" (Mambrol, 2016, para. 01). At times it is also used for the purpose of creating "a new narrative voice" (Nuri, 2013, para. 12). Besides that, pastiche can also be the combination and fusion of multiple elements such as that of metafiction and time fragmentation, science and detective fiction, or even historical accounts and fiction (Mambrol, 2016).

2.2.2.2. Temporal Distortion

Another criterion of postmodernism is the impetus use of disrupted narratives. The latter is about making the events of story flowing in a non-linear way, creating a jumbled plot. In fact, non-linear narration appears in several ways in postmodern writings. It can be "cyclical, mythical or spiral" (Fedosova, 2015, p. 77). Mythical narratives are those mythical stories which usually "undergo or enact an ordered sequence of events" in a far distant past (Magoulick, 2014, para. 01), while spiral narratives are those in which the "story twirls in circles until the main character has made a final decision" (Boon, 2019, para. 08). Cyclical narration, in its turn, is when the storyline moves in a circular flow, to have its ending right at the story's point of departure. According to Mohammad Ataullah Nuri, time in postmodern writings can also "overlap, repeat, or bifurcate into multiple possibilities" (Nuri, 2013, para.

16). Other types of time disruption can be through flashbacks (where events are past memories), flashforwards (where events are expected or set in the future), retrograde (where events go in a reverse direction), achrony (where event are presented in a messed-up way), syllepsis (in which time is not even the reference for ordering events), or through a zigzag flow (where events go shuttle back and forth between past, present, and future periods) (Collins, 2023, para. 08).

2.2.2.3. Paranoia

Being one of the striking consequences that took over people's psychologies during the period of Cold War, paranoia was also a striking feature of postmodern writing. According to Nurten Sen, a Turkish lecturer, "paranoia is a classic trope of Postmodernism" (2020, p. 174). Thus, paranoia is believed to be expressive to the chaos that characterized the postmodern age, being a period of rejecting order (Nuri, 2013). As a matter of fact, this device is all about the presence of speculation, fear and suspicion in a narrative (Mambrol, 2017).

2.2.2.4. Techno-Culture, Media, Pop and the Hyperreal

Postmodernism proliferated during the time of technological boost. This might be the main cause why techno-culture and hyperreality took place as major components in postmodern writing. Techno-culture stands for extensive use of machinery in literary settings. At times, the machine is imagined with an ability to surpass human beings. Techno-culture does not emphasize technological advancements' endeavours for expansion; rather, it focuses on society being "the object of such expansion" (IvyPanda, 2021, para. 01).

Regarding the increasing use of technology in its creation and transmission, media culture was one of the results of technology witnessing a growing presence in both real and literary worlds. Another culture resulting from such advancements was the Pop one. The latter

was characterized by the presence of fooding and dieting notions besides music, perfumery and drugs (Akbar, Asif & Nusrat, 2019).

The presence of the previously mentioned cultural notions gave birth to another concept, known as 'hyperreality'. The latter is, according to Jean Baudrillard, a Frensh philosopher, "very much associated with postmodern culture and society that is vulnerable to television and electronic media" (qtd in Akbar et al., 2020, p. 423). Overall, hyperreality points out to the unreal representations of things, that their unreality can hardly be spotted due to a high extent of closeness between reality and its hyperreal version (Mambrol, 2016). Based on Nabila Akbar's understanding of the term, however, hyperreality is associated with the fake real-life-like image that media evoke in the audience's minds. In this regard, Akbar reckons that people in touch with the different media tend to be "unable to see the gap between the things presented and the reality" (Akbar et al., 2020, p. 423). Therefore, unaware about the fakeness of the displayed versions, those people get to believe them.

2.2.2.5. Postmodernism and the Paranormal: Magical Realism as a Key Tool

It is another postmodern feature that marked the writings of the era. Magic realism has its roots in the 1925's book of *After Expressionism: Magical Realism* by the German author Frantz Roh. The latter used the term to refer to a type of paintings that tried to present real ordinary things in a way that shows their magical, at times their awkward, side. The concept's use kept cycling until it reached the hands of Angel Flores who, in 1955, and in an English essay that he wrote, he mentioned 'magical realism' as a concept that merges "elements of magic realism and marvellous realism" (MasterClass, 2021, para. 06). Magical realism existed in many works that have been released prior to its appearance, yet writers did not have the intention to use it as a concept and a feature of postmodernism. One case for this was Kafka's *The Metamorphosis.* All in all, this postmodern device, per se, was characterized by the use of magical elements although the narrative most of the time takes place in realistic

settings. Magic in such cases is inserted as if it is real. Moreover, magical realism tends to present a limited amount of information, it is usually used for criticism, and it unfolds stories in a distorted plot-line (MasterClass, 2021). In fact, magical elements, were also referred to as 'pataphysics' in Ihab Hassan's investigations upon features of postmodern writings. To him, and alongside with all kinds of paranormal aspects, they were part and parcel of postmodernism (Akbar, Asif & Nusrat, 2019)

2.2.2.6. Black Humour and Irony

Both of black humour and irony are features of postmodern writing. The former is, according to the editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, an alternative type of comedy which was written and performed for the sake of pointing out at the absurdity of life. The concept appeared about two decades before its use grew popular as a postmodern type of humour in 1960s (2023). It is known by the common use of "farce and low comedy to make clear that individuals are helpless victims of fate and character" (Britannica, 2023, para. 01). The latter, however, is used to refer to things that differ -oppose or contradict- from what have been used to express them. According to Raymond Malewitz, an associate professor of American literature, irony is found "whenever a person says something or does something that departs from what they (or we) expect them to say or do" (2019, para. 02). Malewitz has divided irony into three classes. The first one is that of verbal irony, which expresses the case in which what was meant contradicts what has been told. The second is that of dramatic irony, which stands for the case where a character misses "an important piece of information that governs the plot that surrounds them" (ibid, para. 07). Finally, situational irony stands for the situation in which results were the opposite of the character's plan, intention, or expectation (ibid).

2.2.2.7. Postmodern Existentialism: From Religious Deconstruction to Taking a Leap of Faith

By the wake of the second great global war, people fell under the grasp of psychological crises. After all the chaos and devastations that they witnessed, a wide range of them questioned the existence of God in a distracted world, started moving away from religious paths, and they lost faith in everything. As a matter of fact, such people confined themselves to living in the absurd; they followed the steps of their predecessors, their conventions and traditions, and they abided to social norms and rituals without taking time or making effort to reflect about their existence. Those who belonged to this category believed that essence comes first and then humans were created. Later on, at the peak of the postmodern age, there was a return to Jean Paul Sartre's "existence precedes essence" (qtd in Hafeez & Abbas, 2022, p. 87). That is to say, people started to believe in the notion that life purposes are not innate, rather, they are things to be looked after. In point of fact, it was Soren Kierkegaard who brought Sartre's statement to the fore again. The Danish Christian-Existentialist both recycled and enhanced what Sartre came with, by including faith into the existential philosophy, which witnessed a long-term religious void, and via the expansion of the notion of thinking out of the social box by making unconventional decisions (Hafeez & Abbas, 2022).

Kierkegaard reckoned that as much as it is the right of everyone to walk on God's path no matter how far their distance from it ever was, it is also everyone's duty finding meaning and essence to their own lives. Sticking to secularism and social ethics and standards is not instrumental to attain knowledge of the self. Rather, self-recognition needs the presence of God as a reference, tutor, and mentor, in the lives of people (ibid). Besides that, people should take clear steps by making personal and spiritual decisions for them to be capable to engage in a journey of acquaintance with the self. Such whole process of "having firm faith in God"

(ibid, p. 101) and "making choices and taking the responsibility of these choices" (ibid) is known as 'leap of faith'. This concept has been coined by Soren Kierkegaard who encouraged people to live "following a religious mode of existence" (ibid), by believing in the existence of God while caring less about "ethical modes of existence" (ibid), and by making choices based on subjective interpretations of things. According to Kierkegaard, such leap that people would take for the sake of finding purposes for their existence might be illogical for others and full of hurdles. Nevertheless, such hardships are inevitable in the face of transformation on the way of finding meaning (Hafeez & Abbas, 2022).

It is important to note, however, that people might go through a period of stress and anxiety when they start thinking of throwing a first step on their transformative journeys. According to Kierkegaard, this is called 'an existential angst'. Such angst, to the Danish theologist, is an ordinary feeling that can only be overcome when one continues his walk on that journey of quest for meaning and essence (ibid).

2.2.2.8.Religious Relativism

Postmodernism is an age of diversity, and therefore, it is no surprise that the notion of religious relativism was present in a good number of postmodern texts (Akbar, Asif & Nusrat, 2019). According to Philip Quinn, an American philosopher and theologist, this concept holds that "at least one, and probably more than one, world religion is correct and that the correctness of a religion is relative to the world-view of its community of adherents" (Quinn, 1995, p. 35). In other words, religious relativism was an assertion for ideological plurality which came as a reaction to old discourses standing in support for mono-ideological thinking. Furthermore, such notion is believed to have come to existence for the purpose of propping the idea that truth is subjective and open to interpretations (Purohit, 2014).

2.2.2.9. Social Dualism and the Dystopian Novel

Social hypocrisy is considered as one of the most important features of the postmodern literature (Akbar et al., 2020). According to Nabila Akbar, a Pakistani researcher, the duality of standards expressed in the postmodern works is nothing but a simulation of the hypocrisy that grew wider in society by the wake of the second world war, although it existed in other times as well. Social hypocrisy is, verily, part and parcel in the stories that the postmodern dystopian novels unveiled (ibid). Akbar provided many instances for this, amongst which were Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love*. Such novels, she stated, described people as being "callous, unscrupulous and careless about what is happening around them" (ibid, p. 422). In its turn, as a place, the postmodern society in such literary works was no more believed to be perfect to live in. It was full of social issues like poverty, unemployment, alcoholism and prostitution, the thing that added to its consideration as a dystopian locus (ibid).

2.2.2.10. Postmodern Feminism

Based on Nabila Akbar's research with her fellow colleagues, postmodern feminism is a postmodern feature which worked on unveiling the duality of standards with which society treated women (Akbar et al., 2020). That is to say, the feminist notions that writings in postmodernism held continued shedding light upon the inequal reception of certain female traits and behaviours, in comparison with their male counterparts, by society (ibid). Moreover, literature of that age, following the feminist wave of the time, also depicted the difference in treating and dealing with the same manners and demeanours among women from different backgrounds. Ditto, it tackled the changing extent and nature of patriarchy throughout the different biological and social levels, and from one cultural category to another (AQA, Edexcel & IB, 2019). Furthermore, women in postmodern writings "demand[ed] an identity that can negotiate between the gender roles and lived experiences" (Rajan, 2015, p.55). In

other words, those women characters endeavored to moderate their traditional gender roles in a way that also corresponds with their lives where they attempted to keep safe their individualistic identities.

2.2.2.11. Alienation

Nabila Akbar also considers Alienation to be one of the narratological criteria of postmodern literature (Akbar, Asif & Nusrat, 2019). In the critique she conducted about *The Forty Rules of Love*, along with other researchers, she argued that "postmodern texts [tend to] exhibit the characters with dilemmas of emptiness, loneliness and alienation" (ibid, p. 1158). By definition, alienation is a detachment which might occur between humans and the social environment around them (social alienation), humans and the nature in which they survive (environmental alienation), humans and God, or between humans and their own selves (individual alienation). This notion was considered paramount in the fields of theology and philosophy (Alienation, n.d.). Theologists and philosophers, however, had different views regarding it. While Karl Marx, for instance, believed that alienation is "the cause of an economical force" and that it is "a socially stimulated issue" Kierkegaard held that it is "caused by the individual, to the individual self " (Turtleneck Philosophy, 2023).

2.2.2.12. Intertextuality

World research has been overwhelmed by a bulk of works on intertextuality ever-since the postmodern thinking emanated; and yet, it is still no easy task to come up with an accurate definition for it regarding the evolution of the term, its intersection with, as well as its inclusion of other techniques (Amna & Zain, 2018). Basically, it is Julia Kristeva, a French linguist and academic, who initiated the term for the first time in her 1966's essay on "Word, Dialogue and Novel" and in "The Bounded Text", another essay that she penned and published shortly after the aforementioned one (Alfaro, 1996). Kristeva's source of

inspiration to launch the term was Bakhtin's research on polyphony (Amna & Zain, 2018) and dialogism (Mouro, 2014).

All texts are connected through invisible threads (Amna & Zain, 2018). There is no such thing as original text, Roland Barthes deduced. "No text is unique or original" (2014, p.25), says Mouro, an Algerian professor of literature. In other words, as Kristeva concluded, a text is nothing but a "multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash [it] is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (Barthes, 1977, p.146). Actually, writers in their part are not originators of their works. Each one of them must have relied on another writer's work on his/her writing journey towards launching a specific work (Amna & Zain, 2018). In this vein, Barthes says that "The writer can only imitate a gesture… His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them" (ibid). Therefore, previous conclusions upon authors' ownership of words were rejected by postmodern thinkers who believed in that words are nothing but "traces of other words" (qtd in Mouro,, 201, p.25).

2.2.2.13. Metafiction

By definition, metafiction stands for "fiction that deals, often playfully and self-referentially, with the writing of fiction or its conventions" (Sarkar, 2021, para.01). it is a kind of fiction that self-consciously points out the devices of fiction (Okuroglu, 2005). It is also "a mode of writing within a broader cultural movement often referred to as post-modernism" (Waugh, 1984, p.21), and it "self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (ibid, p.02). Putting it differently, metafiction is a self-conscious fiction, and it is one of the striking features that characterize postmodern literature. The term has first been used by William H. Gass, an American writer, in his 1970's essay on "Philosophy and the Form of Fiction" to name the newly born self-referential novel. It is highly related to what was known

as experimental writing during the seventh decade of the twentieth century. Noteworthily, while being experimental, metafiction also questioned its own experimentation (Okuroglu, 2005).

Metafiction is also known as Romantic irony. However, the latter is used interchangeably with the former label only when -in one work- there is both romanticism and a self-reference to its romantic nature (Sarkar, 2021, para.01). In fact, many alternative labels were given to 'metafiction' before settling at that specific term. Self-conscious fiction, surfiction, narcissistic fiction and introverted fiction, to name but a few, are all names that have been used by postmodernist writers to point out to their experimental texts lying inside what they called 'new novels' -also known as 'anti-novels'-. Discernibly, all the previously mentioned terms flow in the same river since they all refer to fiction referring to its own fictionality. This is known as self-reflexivity, a concept that was born in the postmodern age to express novels' self-consciousness of their quixotic nature (Okuroglu, 2005).

Many other scholars tried to define metafiction. Although their definitions have a lot in common, yet there still are some slight differences between one another. According to Masood Raja (2022), the prefix 'meta' stands for going beyond the meaning that the root carries. Therefore, metafiction (or meta-fiction), based on his understanding of the conception, stands for going beyond fiction. In other words, it is about the text's inclusion of parts where the flow of events change direction and jump out of the fictional frame of the story to state realistic facts. The process, in fact, resembles self-reflexivity, another post-modernist term. Yet, the latter is only about "the work itself pointing out to its own artificiality" (Raja, 2022, 4mn); such technique is usually used as a reminder that keeps the reader reminiscent of the imaginative nature of the text.

However, in the case of metafiction, going out from the fictional flow of events is not necessarily for remembrance of the fictional nature of the story. Instead, it usually comes in

form of insertion of historical or realistic data, at times observations, and it is usually used for purposes of emphasizing or clarifying an idea, or to transmit a specific message (Raja, 2021). On another side, Robert Scholes, an American theorist specialized in literature, introduced a simple statement that defines metafiction. He said that it is simply "a fiction about fiction" (Cited in Szittya, 1981, p. 818). This scholar, then, unlike Raja Masood, explains the prefix 'meta' as being synonymous to 'about'. Therefore, his definition emphasizes the way such writings point out to fiction while they are already fictional (Okuroglu, 2005).

Conflicting views followed the appearance of metafiction. Consequently, two leagues were distinguished: that of authors and scholars believing that metafiction excluded novels from existence, and that of those who claimed that rather it launched its rebirth. The second league of researchers laid their argument on a number of literary works, which were released way before the postmodern movement, in which a self-consciousness of fictionality was spotted. Among these works are Jane Austin's *Northanger Abbey*, and Hamlet by William Shakespear. In the former, there has been a reference to the existence of a writer engaging in the process of writing, while in the latter, acting was referred to amidst the work (Orlowski, 1996).

Metafiction stemmed from a strong desire of postmodern authors to break up with traditional writing. It came as a reaction to the literary rules that existed during the modern era, which, to them, it was shackling. Such rules were mostly those that proponents of realism came up with. Their call for exactly representing reality as it is, their "verisimilitude principle, true-to-life characterization, and plausibility in constructing the plot structure" (Okuroglu, 2005, p.32) were restricting that they felt free once metafiction was unveiled. Opponents of modern realism actually rejected it as it was full of organization and generalizations which do not apply to everyone. In this vein, Okuroglu wrote, based on Patricia Waugh's findings:

> The historical period we are living through has been singularly uncertain, insecure, self-questioning and crucially pluralistic"; thus metafiction "clearly reflects this dissatisfaction with, and breakdown of, traditional values". Instead of creating the illusion of outside reality, metafictional self-reflexivity explores the problem of how man mediates his experience of the world; therefore "metafiction pursues such questions through its formal self-exploration, drawing on the traditional metaphor of the world as book"... Metafiction shows that fictions are not real things and literary realism is "a tantalizing construction (qtd in ibid).

Such restrictions, therefore, did nothing but adding needless obstacles to writers when they engage in any writing journey. Besides that, it caused them to be paranoid as they were entering an age whose spirit, rules, and readers were not compatible with modernist thinking and realism (Waugh, 1984). In opposition to that, metafiction was liberating. In this regard, Waugh proceeds, "Metafictional deconstruction has not only provided novelists and their readers with a better understanding of the fundamental structures of narrative; it has also offered extremely accurate models for understanding the contemporary experience of the world as a construction, an artifice, a web of interdependent semiotic systems" (Waugh, 1984, p. 19).

Characteristics which scholars spotted in metafictional works vary. Nevertheless, three main features were spot in most of works of metafiction; namely, intertextuality, experimentation, and authorship obtrusion. Almost every metafictional work is part of an intertextual talk that either links narrative levels inside of the same work (like the creation of a character that plays the role of a writer whose work is someway tied to the main story of the real author), or the current text with a formerly published one. Moreover, metafictional works are experimentational. They point out to their fiction, they express a break up with traditions, they are sceptical about reality which they also reject to emulate. Furthermore, metafictional texts are usually open to the interruption of authors. This happens throughout a comment that the writer involves himself with in the narrative, or via statements where he candidly talks to

the reader (Sarkar, 2021). Such literary behaviour is a self-reflexive one. It is used mainly to trigger readers' interaction with the metafictional text between his hands (MasterClass, 2021).

Metafiction-users tend to draw bonds between reality and language. The latter provides access to knowing the world, and consequently, it can also be considered as a key to building a certain extinct of people's understanding of reality. The reality in the metafictional (or fictional) mindset, however, is subjective. In other words, it is reflective to the way its maker sees the world. However, in the (pre)-realist era, works of fiction used to be chronological, constructive, and they used to follow a logical flow of events. By the wake of it, during the post-realist age, writers, being members of a world's post-war community, were lost in the absurd. As a matter of fact, the pillars on which their works used to be uplifted broke down. Thus, there was no way that works of literature could be constructive or chronological in a world witnessing an absence of plain reality, deconstructed spirits and messy personalities, and a chaotic time (Okuroglu, 2005).

In opposition to the bonds it creates, metafiction tears apart every tie with former literary trends. Conversely, in a way that resembles Russian formalism whose language focuses on its own self, metafiction is autonomous the way it pours out its devices for the sake of contemplating about "its own nature as an artefact" (ibid, p.34). Furthermore, metafiction also reflects upon "its processes of production, and its potential effects on the reader" (ibid). lines that used to separate readers from writers in works of fiction have actually been blurred, at time omitted, due to the direct contact that authors of metafictional narratives create between themselves and those in touch with their works (MasterClass, 2021).

Characters in metafiction are real-life like. Fictional characters in texts of the pre-metafiction era had the tendency of having unrealistic features, or engaging in fictional acts. Nevertheless, metafictional ones are characterized by being life-like. In terms of mental and physical features as well as their behaviours, they are like real life people. Usually, characters

in metafictional texts are self-reflexive. That is to say, they are aware that they are fictional (Okuroglu, 2005).

Unlike traditional texts, authors in metafiction are not monopolizing. He/she is neither the logos, nor the controller. The only thing that they are, is "linguistic entities" (ibid, p.38). throughout the tool of self-reflexivity, they are created by the language in so far as the latter creates them (ibid). As their writings typify, metafictional authors tend to engage in special writing experiences, different from traditional ones. One of their ways to do that is arranging their narratives into multiple layers (Masterclass, 2021). Such types of narratives are called 'embedded narratives'.

All in all, metafiction has multiple purposes. It is used to parody other works, to put the two opposing polars of reality versus fiction under the spot, to bring to the fore general truths or comments on human life, to go against readers' expectations by bringing up creative scenarios (MasterClass, 2021). Metafiction also "helps give a work of text more significance by providing an outward, exploratory look of a self-contained world" (ibid, para.03).

2.2.2.13.1. From Self-Consciousness to Self-Reflexivity

Author's self-awareness in the real world turned into self-reflexivity in literary works of fiction. That is to say, a tendency in fictional works to pointing out to their own fictiveness was the fashion of the era, and it was the work's way to reflect the author's self-consciousness. This happened due to a disbelief in modernist realism which started to be seen as a logical fiction rather than a reflection of reality. In fact, modernist realism was considered archaic, or conventional. It was believed to be constructed by the language, to tell how things really are in real life. (Meta)fiction, on the other hand, believes in the multiplicity of worlds and in different interpretations of reality. Self-reflectivity, then, precluded readers of metafiction in the postmodern age from interacting with pre-metafiction realism (Okuroglu,

2005). Meanwhile, those same readers are "made aware … the author is situated in the text" (ibid, p.38).

Self-reflexive devices are devices with the major role of referring to the fictivity of the text. They are also referred to as reflexive frames. Waugh believes that literary texts are, like life, full of frames. She, then, says, "everything is framed, whether in life or in novels" (Waugh, 1984, p.28). Likewise, metafiction accentuates the idea of frames, claiming that they are the solid blocks that make up life. However, it is noteworthy, she adds, that it is "impossible to know where one frame ends and another begins" (ibid, p.30). According to Waugh, reality is not discovered and transmitted on papers. It is in fact fabricated (Waugh, 2005, p.51). Waugh says that metafictionists "set out to show that reality is not something that is simply given… it is no longer experienced as an ordered and fixed hierarchy…but a web of multiple realities... reality is manufactured" (ibid, p.36).

2.2.2.14. Historiographic Metafiction

Many scholars throve to come up with an accurate definition to 'historiographic metafiction'. However, that of Linda Hutcheon got the principal light as she is known as an initiator of the concept. In his 2010's article on historiographic metafiction, Michael Butter mentioned that "The term "historiographic metafiction" was coined by Linda Hutcheon in her essay "Beginning to Theorize the Postmodern" in 1987 and then further developed in her seminal study *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988) to describe "those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages." (qtd in Butler, 2011, p. 01).

Based on the way the famous Deconstructivist Jacque Derrida digests things, a word's meaning does not lie in the linguistic structure that makes it up. Neither it is a reflection of the mental picture that the mind draws in response to its utterance. A word's meaning actually

comes from the difference of sense that sparks whenever other words are mentioned to refer to other things, different than the ones with other linguistic shapes.

Likewise, a text, be it historical or fictional, does not obtain meaning based on its resemblance to, or transmission of reality, or realism; rather, its meaning can only come to life when it is compared to other texts. A text in such way is void of meaning apart from other writings. In this context, Christopher Butler, an English researcher, both quotes and comments upon his research counterpart Umberto Eco in his work titled *Post-Modernism: A Very Short Introduction* (2002) when he said that "'books always speak of other books, and every story tells a story that has already been told" (qtd in Butler, 2002, p.32). In connection therewith, Butler added that "this view only ends up in a kind of textual idealism, because all texts are seen as perpetually referring to other ones, *rather than to any external reality*. No text ever finally establishes anything about the world outside itself. It never comes to rest, but merely, to use Derrida's term, 'disseminates' variations on previously established concepts or ideas" (Butler, 2002, p. 32).

Therefore, with the existence of different languages, and different texts between the hands of different readers, a single literary body cannot only have one sole interpretation. As a matter of fact, history as well can be seen from different angles and can have multiple interpretations, especially in light of the postmodern thinking that is known for scepticism. Those historical interpretations could be referred to in works of literature (Martinec, 2021). Such type of writings witnessed proliferation during the postmodern age and was known by historiographic metafiction, a postmodern literary type that includes reflections about, interpretations of, and references to stories and peoples from the past (Raja, 2019).

Somnath Sarkar says that "historiographic metafiction is a quintessentially postmodern art form, with a reliance upon textual play, parody and historical re-conceptualization" (2021, para.06). Historiographic metafiction is considered as a "sub-genre of metafiction" (ibid).

Hence, it is a baby that was born out of the postmodern womb. It is a self-reflexive type of writings where history is woven with subjective views and fiction (Belalia, 2018). It is where "fiction and history are intertextually linked to bring together worldly wisdom and literary aspects" (Amna & Zain, 2018, p.32). The term has been initiated by Linda Hutcheon, a Canadian academic, and it also stands for "the reconstruction of the past from the point of view of the present" (qtd in Belalia, 2018, p.29).

According to Amna Saeed and Fatima Zain, such literary writings are usually judged as being "ahistorical due to the submission of historical backdrop to fictitious situations" (2018, p. 32). In fact, it is according to many postmodernists that writing about history is like writing about any other discourse; it is open to subjective interference. This does not imply that all history is fallacious, for original historical sources, discourses, and texts are excluded from such views. Rather, the same view allows opening the door for questioning reported historical stories, for reporting history is sort of recounting past time stories. Under this loop, the situation is similar to recounting any realistic account. In both cases, stories, events and incidents are recounted throughout the lenses of the reporter, the way the reporter sees them (Martinec, 2021).

Historiographic metafiction is also a testimony that postmodern writing often offers room for the past -history- in the present literary home (Raja, 2019). This feature has long been neglected after long considering literature and historiography as one "tree which sought to interpret experience, for the purpose of guiding and elevating man" (qtd in Hutcheon, 2004, p. 105) during the nineteenth century. Then, historiography and literature drifted apart although the idea of realistic writing about actual facts was a linking thread capable of joining Ranke's historicism and realistic novel writers on one writing scale (Hutcheon, 2004). This break up, Hutcheon states in her 2004's book on *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History,*

Theory, Fiction, led literary fiction and historical studies to be two different disciplines on separate academic streams (ibid).

At the same time, however, it is that same academic break up that urged postmodernists to dig into the two fields, and to end up discovering what can link the two is much more than what breaks them apart. In other words, Hutcheon says that the two aforementioned types "derive their force more from verisimilitude than from any objective truth; they are both identified as linguistic constructs, highly conventionalized in their narrative forms, and not at all transparent either in terms of language or structure; and they appear to be equally intertextual, deploying the texts of the past within their own complex textuality" (Hutcheon, 2004, p. 105). That way, that linking thread was named historiographic-metafiction, a type that revived that one tree conception that carries literary branches and historical ones (Hutcheon, 2004).

Actually, writing about history in literary fiction is not a direct process. Historical facts and biographical information are not being directly shared with readers. Rather, such historiographic metafictional works usually display history through characters and their personal experiences inside the story. Characters might be real historical figures telling and expressing situations and feelings that the writer expected, or imagined, them to experience. Otherwise, there might be fictional characters surviving real moments from history, and therefore transmitting real historical events as part of their own stories. It is at this level that what Masood Raja calls "personal, social, cultural and political preferences and prejudices" (Raja, 2019, 30Mn45) interfere; and it is those things that makes such history fictionalized (Raja, 2019).

Historical writing is a textual-based approach. Therefore, whenever there is historical writing, there is intertextuality. Overall, historiographic metafiction is a combination of three postmodern features, i.e. historiography, metafiction and intertextuality.

PART -II-

Nested and Polyvocal: A Venture into Postmodern Tellability

Stories in the postmodern age came in multiple shapes. Nested and echoed, they unfolded captivating worlds, enchanting adventures, and indelible braveries and memories. In light of the foregoing, this section will venture into multi-layering and polyvocal modes of narration. In the journey of addressing both techniques, other related matters and conceptions would also be addresses.

2.3. Embedded Narratives and Literary Discourses

Narration witnessed drastic changes over time. During the early years of the literary age, stories used to be laid on one layer, stretching from beginning to end, following a straight chronological line. Events were most of the time communicated throughout one narrator, which was likely aware of all what happens to the story's characters, and writers who penned their narratives into multiple layers were very few. Nevertheless, during the postmodern age, multi-layered works of literature proliferated. In this regard, the following lines will unveil several definitions and comprehensions of this narrative technique, its components, its relationship with oral tradition, as well as its functions in a given literary work. Beforehand, however, a differentiation between the terms story, narrative and discourse is going to be provided. Still, considerations must be given to the fact that this research is going to use the three of them interchangeably.

2.3.2. Story, Narrative, or Discourse:

Before delving deeper in embedded narratives, some definitions are needed to differentiate between some recurrent terms in light of this study; namely, story, narrative, and discourse. A story is the set of events and experiences that a group of characters go through.

A narrative, however, is about re-ordering such events, adding some, and deleting others. There usually might be more than a single narrative throughout which a story could be told (Rose, 2023).

To Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, a theoretician and a narratologist, "a narrative is a communication, and thus must be communicated by someone, or at least by some mediating channel of communication" (qtd in Waldron, 2012, p.10). In other words, a narrative is mainly about who is narrating (i.e. narrator) and what is being narrated (i.e. plot events). The latter actually comprises two main elements: the set of events that form the story of the literary work, and what is called discourse (Waldron, 2012).

Discourse is more of a technical term. Like narrative, it is about the way a story is scripted, not regarding the details of events but regarding the techniques used to tell the story. In this regard, two types of discourses can be differentiated, a linguistic and a narratological one (Larry, 2020). The former stands for the linguistic choice of the writer for the different conversations, taking place at different situations that characters engage in. instances for this are: "parent-child conversations, boss-employee conversations, dinner table conversations versus schoolyard conversations …" (ibid, para. 01). Whereas, the latter, i.e. narratological discourse, is explained as "the means by which a story and its significance are communicated. Aspects such as temporal sequencing, focalization, narrator's relation to the story and audience come up when talking about this kind of discourse" (ibid, para. 02).

2.3.3. What Are Embedded Narratives?

Also known as nested narratives (Lavington, 2003), or interpolated narratives (Artan, 2014). It is a literary device throughout which an author encapsulates a shorter narrative (i.e. document, fairy tale, story etc.) in the main narrative (Artan, 2014, p.01). Putting it differently, it is about a text encompassing at least one other text in the same narrative, in a

way similar to that of a frame containing a picture (O-Dea, 2004), not only it carries the physical body of photos but also it serves as "a border enclosing items of distinct power" (O-Dea, 2004, para.01).

Embedded narration has to include at least two layers, an embedded narrative (layer or text) and an embedding one (Waldron, 2012). This binary of embedding/embedded is also recognized as frame/framed narratives. The term frame has been inspired from an example of a 'cadre' in which pictures are put. That cadre is not there for the lone purpose of preserving the picture. It is there for the sake of drawing the lines between the picture's world and that of the one outside of it. Credits of this comparison are owned to Gregory O'Dea, a literature researcher an expert, who said:

> A picture frame serves to ease attention toward the picture, providing separation and transition between outer and inner, the observer's world and the world contained by the frame [. . .] The frame narrative metaphor therefore implies that the outermost narrative occupies this marginal space, and that its purpose is both distinctive and transitional: to distinguish our own experience in the world of real things from that represented in the framed narrative, and to move us toward that framed, (hypo)diegetic experience through a narrative space that is neither the reader's world nor the world of the framed story. As Christine Brooke-Rose has it, "a frame [. . .] concentrates, and so intensifies, all that is explicitly within it, and leaves implicit all that is without" (2004, para 01).

In fact, Waldron does not prefer the use of 'frame narratives' as he sees that such term "carries with it unfortunate connotations of separateness and expendability" and that "it implies that a portion of the text is merely narrative packaging for the central narrative" (2012, p. 15), the thing that he thinks is false. According to him, the embedded text is as important as the embedding one, and an extraction of it would inevitably change the whole flow of the meaning of the narrative (Waldron, 2012).

On the same track, Gregory O'Dea believes that using the frame/picture metaphor to define embedded narratives is only concise under the lens of a readerly approach. That is to say, that comparison only portrays the dual carriageway over which readers keep shuttling in

and out of the embedded text without delving into the complexities of the relationship between the enclosing text and the stories it comprises. In this vein, O'Dea says that "conceiving the frame as a distinguishing, facilitating, or liminal device does not go very far towards clarifying the narrative construct, nor toward explaining the existence of the frames themselves" (2004, para.02).

Throughout the same loop, Peter Brooks (1984), a researcher, goes a step further by giving the example of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness.* He says that "the structure of framed narration used in *Heart of Darkness* will not [. . .] give a neat pattern of nested boxes, bracketed core structures, nuts within shells" (Brooks, 1984, p.256). In *Heart of Darkness*, the 'embedded' tale has its meaning in the 'embedding' which, in its turn, is incomplete and unfathomable without the embedded. The meaning of each cannot be fully grasped apart from the other. Therefore, telling which text embeds the other is such a hard task if chronology or precedency were not taken into consideration (Brooks, 1984).

This issue that Brooks puts to the fore is not believed to be particular to *Heart of Darkness*, "The frame is never, and can never be, just a frame. Embedded and embedding narratives always act upon each other" (Waldron, 2012, p.16). To support his aforementioned claim, Brooks has even quoted Conrad when he -through one of his characters- plainly expressed that a true sense of an episode from Marlow's tale cannot be found inside, but in the outside realm of it, saying that, "…the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale" (Conrad, 1999, p.18).

In a work where the writer chooses the embedded type of narration to tell the events of the story(es) he would like to lay, time plays a key role. The word 'time' here is double edged in terms of role. The embedded and embedding narratives can be ordered based on the period in which the events of each layer took part. Here, a chronological ordering can be applied to

start with the one which happened first. Or, they can be ordered based on which one was delineated first (Waldron, 2012).

The relationship of the embedded text and the embedding one is of subordinating nature. That nature, however, is not an indication of the superiority of one side over another. Rather, it only says that both sides need one another. The steering wheel of this relationship is 'mediacy'. That is to say, whenever there is embedding narration, there is mediation; a text playing the role of a mediator between readers and the other text(s). This text, known as frame text, is the window that allows the embedded text to be glanced at. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that this same nested text can be a frame for a third story. (Waldron, 2012).

In fact, in cases where embedding comprises three parts, many possibilities can be for the layers occupying the role of each of the aforementioned binary. Samuel James Waldron names two possible ordering types with 'vertical' and 'horizontal' framing. The latter is coined after an embedding where the first story embeds the second and third ones. The former, however, is when the first story embeds the second one which, in its turn, embeds the third narrative. There could exist another case where the first and second stories are being woven at the same level, with one of them embedding a third story. All in all, the more the number of narratives in the embedding case increases, the more ordering possibilities would vary (Waldron, 2012).

Ordering embedding and embedded narratives is also related to the nature of the world(s) occupied by characters of each layer. This relationship is ontological, and it is of subordinating nature as well. Worlds can be real or fictional. The latter is almost all the time subordinate to the former, because fiction is a real-world creation. If a narrative consists of two stories where one happens in a real world while the other occurs in a fictional one, then that of the fictional setting is likely to be subordinated to the real-life one. If a literary work consists of three texts, then the real-world layer would come first, followed by a fictional

embedded story which would embed a story whose setting is far fictional than that of the second layer (Waldron, 2012).

2.3.4. Ryan's Understanding of Tellability and Embedded Narratives

It is crucial to point out to an unprecedented definition which stands out of the ordinary stream of definitions given by other researchers to tellability and embedded narratives. This unusual understanding of the literary concept was provided by the Suisse independent researcher and writer Marie-Laure Ryan who penned a number of valuable books upon miscellaneous topics on narratology, fiction and textuality (Ryan, n.d.). Marie's notes sparked great interest among world-wide researchers in the field of literature for the various contributions she made and the literary creations she gave birth to. What would be tackled in this part are the narratological views that she shared in her article, titled "Embedded Narratives & Tellability" (1986).

Marie started her article with a call for imagination in which she invited readers to put themselves in the shoe of a writer whose job is to create a story with the help of an "Automatic Experimental Story Outline Producer" (AESOP). The latter is a system which takes care of weaving plots with a human guidance. The system's working method is to ask questions whose answers -by the one guiding the process- delineate the story's lineaments and concretize it in the form of a text. To clarify the situation, Marie gives the example of the creation of one of the world's most famous children stories "The Fox & the Crow", which revolves around a malicious fox that makes a wicked scheme to steal a piece of cheese from the crow's mouth.

The Suisse researcher presumes that because the system is only a machine, the human guide would insert the topic of the story first. Then, the system would automatically ask for the knot that should be unfolded. Marie suggests that it would be that the fox is experiencing

an appetite. If the guide stops at this level, the story would end at this point, and it would be trivial. Therefore, the one in charge would insert that the cheese should be in the crow's mouth, and that the fox would be aiming at stealing it. The system, here, would write that the fox would be involved in a fight with the crow to get it. However, this would seem too straightforward to the writer, Marie assumes. Therefore, another try would be through the insertion of the following points: the fox has to express his admiration of the crow's voice; out of appreciation, the crow would start singing that he drops out the piece of cheese, the cheese is now available, the fox steals it. Those final insertion, Marie thinks, would make the artificial intelligence's narrative more complex, yet more fascinating.

The point from that situation that Mrs. Ryan introduced is to shed light on the importance of the way stories are being narrated. Not only the addition of unordinary plots added fascination to the story, but also those actions of the fox -when expressing the beauty of the crow's voice for instance- were left unexplained and thus equivocal. Such actions and moments in the story are silences that writers intend to leave empty to keep them open to readers' guessing and interpretations. The fox did not express his intention behind flattering the crow, for matters of suspense perhaps; that was left to readers' private reflections and analysis. Such silences are what Marie-Laure call 'embedded narratives'; narratives which are not part of the script of the literary piece but those which are implicitly understood and communicated in readers' heads. Ryan (1986) says in this vein:

> By embedded narratives, I do not simply mean the acts of narration explicitly represented in a story (as studied for instance by Bai or Chambers), but more generally, any story-like representation produced in the mind of a character and reproduced in the mind of the reader … When a mental act outlines such a segment, its content presents the form of a plot, and it gives rise to what I call an "embedded narrative" (p.320) [. . .] The difference between this concept of embedded narrative and what is usually understood by the term is one of metaphorical versus literal interpretation: for me there need be no speech acts and no discourse but simply a mental representation of the same form as the fabula of which it is a part (p.323).

Far from common understanding of the term, Marie steps out of the crowed and sees that other definitions only tackle the denotative meaning of embedded narration which is related to the existence of a (set of) text(s) inside another one. The researcher sheds light upon the connotative side of the concept, usually forsaken and receiving little to no attention by other literature experts.

Marie has also her own binary of the elements that make up a narrative. According to her, every single work is laid upon a fabula and a discourse. Like her counterparts, she reckons that discourse is about the way the different events and actions take place chronologically. Its role lies behind paving the way for the story to be delineated throughout the creation and preparation for the whole universe inside of which things would occur. Fabula, on the other front, is Riyan's label for story. It is "a bundle of possible stories, some actual and some virtual, whose interaction determines the behaviour of characters" (Ryan, 1986, p.324). According to Ryan, every fabula stands over cravings (what characters aim at or fancy) being led by specific plans (plots). Based on that, embedded narratives are characters' intentions, ideologies, schemes, and desires springing from "retrospective interpretations of the past" or "projections of the future" (p.323) in every non-typical fabula. They, thus, result from the way fabula is presented; i.e. discourse. Their presence serves at evoking possibilities in readers' minds about certain happenings. That same discourse plays the role of both a catalyst which evokes anticipations in the inner world of readers, and that of a compass which guide them in their reading journey (ibid).

What should be noted is that the possibilities and expectations that readers build throughout embedded narratives might not be always accurate and in accordance with what the story would reveal by the end. At times an embedded narrative is not discovered until the physical act happens. At other times, such discovery will not happen until the story is over, depending on the complexity of the plot, its intelligibility, to what extent events are

unordinary, and on readers' imaginative power and intelligence. Nevertheless, there is a possibility that those same expectations of readers and what is communicated inside the story's world meet at some crossing points (ibid). In Marie's words, the situation is displayed the following way:

> Both characters and readers are confronted, through the fabula, with situations which establish their own field of possibilities (cf. Bremond). For instance, if there is a problem, there may or may not be an attempt to solve it; if there is an attempt, it may or may not succeed. The actively involved reader tries to anticipate the development of the plot or to reconstrue the past by exploring the forward and backward paths compatible with the current situation. If some of these possibilities are actively considered by characters, they form embedded narratives. If not, they have no psychological roots in the actual world, but they still may shape the reader's reaction to the text (1986, p.330).

Embedded narratives, the way Ryan presents them, do not usually exist in the text. In fact, they exist in the minds of readers. Therefore, she often introduces them as virtual (embedded) narratives. Nevertheless, their manifestation in the text is possible, via different ways (ibid). They can appear in the form of a "diegetic summary to full mimetic representation, that is, from brief reports of the occurrence and contents of mental acts to a direct quotation of inner discourse or actual speech acts" (p.328).

Marie-Laure Ryan believes that virtual embedded narratives are very important components that every reader needs when engaging in a reading journey (ibid). To her, they are like an Aladdin carpet that takes those in touch with the work to mysterious places, "making them travel in imagination" (1986, p. 331).

2.3.5. Embedding Layers

The embedding technique, in a given narrative, requires the existence of more than one text in a same work, with each forming a separate layer. For each layer, a different narrator is likely to be engaged in narrating events that set its story apart from the other's one. However, a couple of remarks must be highlighted when speaking about embedding -or nesting-. First

of all, the number of narrators does not denote the number of texts in a narrative, and vice-versa. That is to say, although not common, there could be one narrator to tell both of the frame and the nested stories.

Also, one character can play the role of more than one narrator. In this case, chronology enters the game. In other words, there should be a temporal difference between two stories being woven by that same teller in charge of narrating multiple stories. As such, more than one text -layer or story- in a literary work does not also necessarily tell that there are many narrators. Still, however, the most common scenario when there are multiple stories is that there are several narrators (Waldron, 2012). One exception that might occur in this case is a work being told by a group of people, using the personal pronoun 'we'.

In fact, spotting the layers that a literary work includes is not always an easy task. At times, it is difficult to judge whether a work of literature (mainly novels) comprises one narrative, or more. Most of the time, this happens when a text includes multiple narratives being narrated by a single narrator (Waldron, 2012). This usually occurs because of the difficulty of identifying the narrative as a multi-layered or a single-layered one with sub-parts (Waldron, 2012).

The difficulty of filtering the different layers in a narrative varies depending on the number of embedded texts, as well as on the way they are organized in the work. Classifying narratives in a work made up of the vertical form of embedding, or in cases when only a couple of stories is being laid is easier than classifying narratives in other cases. Generally speaking, it is the initial story that occupies the embedding position. For the same case, other stories are embedded in the first one (Waldron, 2012).

2.3.6. Embedded Narration and Oral Tradition

Embedded narratives have been tightly tied to oratory, or oral storytelling (Waldron, 2012). According to Bonnie Irwin, an expert specialized in literature, the 'framing' type of discourses serves as a linking medium that joins traditional and modern literary narratives (Irwin, 1995). This is because it has always existed, even in old tales, medieval stories, and gothic literature. Instances are numerous in this respect, from *Arabian nights*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, to Shelly's *Frankenstein.*

A common thing between all of the previously mentioned works is that their first layer - the frame- includes a narrator(s) who orally recites the embedded story(ies) (Waldron, 2012). In *Arabian Nights*, it is Shahrazad who orally tells Dinarzad a tale every night (Irwin, 1995). In *Canterbury Tales*, the same role was performed by the pilgrims, and in *Frankenstein*, the job was by Walton throughout letters (Waldron, 2012). Therefore, it is true that these works are written, but the frame level makes the situation similar to oral story telling. For the latter, the audience are listeners of the story, while for the former it is (usually) the audience of the story as well as those being touched by the work from the real word (readers of those works) (ibid).

A point that should be stressed is that although real world readers are put on the same scale with characters listening to an orally delivered narrative in a literary work, the experience of each as witnessers of the story differs. Nevertheless, Irwin reckons that both sides undergo the same feeling of fascination with the story being told. Like Dinarzad whose urge for listening to more stories drove him to break the rules that he set for so long (having a woman murdered each day), readers of the embedded narratives that Shahrazad weaves also live that same experience of enchantment that they may forget that Shahrazad herself is not a real storyteller but a mere fictional character whose audience is the king towarrds whom she addresses when she spins the tales (Irwin, 1995).

Although they are still believed to be valid to a wide legion of researchers, voices arguing that embedded narratives serve as linking media between the written literary tradition and the oral one, based on the views of many others, are considered to be faulty. One reason behind that is that embedding as a device already existed during the oral era of literature. Another claim, however, adds that framing as a device not only existed before the birth of early bird written texts, but also that the whole frame level is the written copy -imitation- of storytellers in oral tradition (Waldron, 2012).

2.3.7. Embedding Functions

All the previously mentioned conflicting claims lead to one end; that is, inquiring about what makes embedding important? And what might be a good reason behind using it? (Waldron, 2012). Such questions were not actually the main focus of the eighteenth century's authors. However, for twentieth century critics, it was a tendency seeking to find responses to such queries, and possible explanations varied (Artan, 2014). For Waldon, embedding is important "because of its usefulness in packaging and transmitting narratives, both oral and written" (Waldon, 2012, p. 21).

Likewise, Irwin thinks that framing "provides a context for reading, listening, and, of course, interpreting the interior tales" (Irwin, 1995, p.28). Both researchers dealt with embedded narratives as multi-layered texts where a frame serves as a mere introductory tool whose main purpose is to set the path for other stories to be laid. Such understanding of the usefulness of the concept is only relatable with those double (or multi)-layered narratives comprising a set of (sub-)stories preceded by a frame in which there is a storyteller who serves as a narrator of the embedded text(s). As a matter of fact, it has been criticized for neglecting other possibilities, like where there is no frame to represent the embedded text(s), or when the text is woven in a mono-layered way presenting its stories using devices other than multi-layered embedding (Waldron, 2012).

For Berna Artan, however, reasons behind the use of this narrative technique varied throughout the different historical and literary periods. In the Middle Ages, the literary market knew a quest for oral traditional stories. The purpose behind this goes back to a willing for writing them down to preserve old literary heritage. Hence, a tendency for collecting a number of tales in one book was born. At times, writers of such works sought to add a pinch of creativity to the collection they gathered. As a matter of fact, many of them ended up writing a first-layer story as an entrance that facilitates putting a context to the collection of stories on the one hand, and drifting from one tale to another on the other one (Artan, 2014). Later on, in an age where written tales were already proliferating, embedding was still used for the sake of coming up with a narrative that embraces various "disparate tales together" (Artan, 2014, p. 01).

By the dawn of the seventeenth century, embedding was mostly "to preserving the oral tradition" (ibid). Another reason for embedding at that century was "creating various fairy tales out of various shorter stories" (Artan, 2014). Howbeit, the same period was also marked by a work that a Spanish writer, named Miguel Cervantes, released under the title of *Don Quixote*. The latter was a work in which the author 'parodied' a type of narratives that was famous at the time, known as chivalric romance. Chivalric romance was a literary type that came both in the form of prose and poetry. It formed an alternative type of wars for which writers waged their pens to engage in battles that, instead of battlefields, they were played over pages (Wills, 2021).

Afterwards, during the eighteenth century, framing was a manifestation of the neoteric thinking of the period. It was used as a tool of comparison between what is traditional and what is modern. In other words, embedded narratives "served as devices to understand, reflect and convey the essence of the contemporary thought that favoured reason and individualism over traditions" (Artan, 2014, p.1-2). The same century was marked by the increasing growth

of the Enlightenment, a movement that contaminated all fields including the literary one. The exhibition of enlightenment in literature was through the employment of philosophical reflections, views and theories in literary works to delve into the human self and sail in its thoughts and feelings. Since novels were witnessing the apex of their popularity being the new rising genre of the time, their stories' characters were the models that represented the change that those theories brought. Hence, emphases of narration shifted from stressing contexts to accentuating characters' inner worlds, an issue that Ian Watt labelled "the problem of defining the individual person" (ibid, p.02).

Watt's views were further analysed in an essay that John Locke released in 1960 and titled *Essay Concerning Human Understanding.* Throughout this work, Locke laid his theory of identity which "challenged the traditional thought and the conventional manner of characterization" (ibid). Locke's theory of identity "considered personal identity (or the self) to be founded on consciousness (viz. memory), and not on the substance of either the soul or the body" (Nimbalkar, 2011, p. 268). Thus, since identity is the final look of the psychological and intellectual changes that experiences brought to individuals' personalities, an urgent need for multiple layers grew for a better explanation of "the self" whose mysteries can best be unveiled when another explains them (Artan, 2014). In this vein, Artan (2014) says:

> The interpolated narrative serves as means to explain that selves are not innate and self-determined, but instead are disparate, dispersed, and dependent upon the other and the narration of the other in order to achieve the appearance of a self-contained and innate identity. By using this narrative technique in order to insert the narration of the other that defines the protagonists, these novels succeed in capturing the essence of Locke's theory of identity (p.03).

Artan has also identified three eighteenth century works that better displayed Locke's theory. These works are Joseph Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda,* and Laurence Sterne's *The Life & Opinions of Tristram Shandy*. These literary trio included

embedding in their narrative structure. This literary device has been used in the three aforementioned novels for a common reason, which is -according to Artan- "to define and contextualize the story/identity of the protagonist [. . .] [and to] wrestle with the new perception of the self that emerges from Locke's theory of personal identity" (ibid, p.03).

However, each one of those literary products received its special criticism and analysis to blow the lid off the most possible intentions behind utilizing embedding. In this regard, *Joseph Andrew* by Fielding faced opposing critiques, both positive and negative. While Alexander Chalmers and Samuel Coleridge praised his technique of interpolation, Sir Walton Scott claimed that it was needless and useless. Other opinions upon Fielding's work can be summed up in the comments that Cauthen Irby Bruce, Sheldon Sack Howard Weinbrot left (ibid). The three critics considered Fielding's embedded narratives as "instructive to the extent that they expose vanity and hypocrisy [. . .] [they] reveal an ethical comment on the actions of the important characters [. . .] truth and morality, ….is found in the novel's change of tone and action during the interpolated tales" (Artan, 2014, p. 04). On another front, *Belinda* is reckoned to have included multi-layered narratives so that one layer explains the other's plot.

Besides that, embedded stories taught characters at the frame level lessons that they could use in their lives. An example to this was when "Elizabeth Kowalevski Wallace claims that Lady Delacour's story helps Belinda learn a moral lesson about domesticity" (ibid, p.06). For Sterne's *The Life & Opinions of Tristram Shandy,* comments were as conflicting those that Fielding received for his previously mentioned work. While Wilbur Cross, an American literary expert and critic, considered embedding in Stern's novel as a tool "to present the illusion of his natural speech with all its easy flow, warmth and colour" (1909, p. 46), William Piper and Samuel Jhonson declared that the full work that stern penned is indecent and quirky (Artan, 2014).

Another utility that critics spoke about is what Irvin Ehrenpreis named "negative analogues to the main character" (qtd in ibid, p.05). On the same track, Douglas Brooks further explained Irwin's idea by claiming that characters of the frame and those of the framed most of the time parallel each other. In other words, each time a novel is written in a multi-layered narrative style, characters of one layer help understanding the other's characters (Artan, 2014). In the same respect, Michael Rosenblum claimed that embedding is at times used "to show the relationships between separate events. Less obviously, but no less necessary, is the use of narrative for discontinuity, making related events intelligible by disentangling them" (Rosenblum, 1978, p. 437). Saying so, he went on the same opinion as Brooks, except that the latter spoke about events when the former compared between characters of the different layers.

To sum up, embedding was used because of three major reasons. First of all, it is a manifestation denoting a rupture with old traditional thinking and a striking sign of embracing the modern scientific thinking of the Enlightenment. Also, embedding facilitated parodying other works, or issues. Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* is a parody to Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, while Fielding's *Shamela* is a parody to Samuel Richardson *Pamela*, for instance. Furthermore, the use of embedding raised due to its utility when using Locke's theory of personal identity. The device of embedding intertwined with the theory of identity is a duo that made a revolution in the literary world by offering novel characterizations and narrative ways. As a matter of fact, works of literature, mainly novels, started to be more profound and informative through the detailed psychological, spiritual and emotional descriptions offered by writers of the time to their stories' characters (Artan, 2014).

Another categorization of the functions of embedding is that which Shlommith Rimmon-Kenan put the fore in his 1983's book, titled *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. The latter found out three ways throughout which the embedded layers operate. They

do that in a thematic, explicative, or in an actional mode. When the embedded functions in a thematic way, a relationship of 'placement in abyss' -also known as 'mise-en-abyme'- is found in the novel. That is to say, the relationship of the embedded and the embedding is of an analogous nature. The part reflects the whole and vice-versa (Waldron, 2012). In other words, "the embedded mirror image can serve as a model for the text as a whole and [. . .] render difficult form salient and legible, and the whole text more navigable" (qtd in ibid, p.31).

Actually, not only similarities can be spotted in the presence of this function but also dissimilarities. When the embedded operates in an explicative way, then the embedded layer plays an informative role. It serves as a guide which provides data that helps better understanding the frame. When the embedded plays an actional role, a relationship of control and manipulation is established. In other words, one layer -usually the one in the higher level- controls the actions and the steps that characters of the lower level take (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983). Waldron has summarized all of the previously mentioned utilities when he said:

> Embedded narratives can drive the action of the narrative that embeds them, and sometimes help to explain it. They can echo the themes at the first level, but they can also challenge or complicate them. Likewise, an embedding narrative contextualises the embedded narrative, guiding the reader's expectations. A first-level narrator can support or confer authority on the second-level narrator, but can also undermine them. Indeed, sometimes an embedding narrative may do both, and can help maintain tension between competing interpretations, as in The Turn of the Screw (Waldron, 2012, p. 30).

If the first part of the quote speaks about the functions of the embedded narratives, the second one talks about those of the embedding. It says that embedding layers put contexts to the framed and direct the predictions of readers along their reading journey. It can also empower other layers as it can disempower them (ibid).

If there is one thing which cannot belong to the features of embedding, neither it can be part of its roles, is purposelessly filling the text. All layers work collaboratively to serve the

general meaning. A change at the level of one level influences, in a way or another, the other level. Although they are likely to look divided in terms of narrative level, they are contextually related in terms of sense (Waldron, 2012).

2.4. Multi-Voicedness: A Postmodern Echo in the Literary Universe

When a musical piece is played, one cannot give its beauty credits to the drums only, neither it can be given to the piano alone, or to the unique sound that violin produces. The credit of the piece's beauty is given to the outcome sound resulting from all these instruments playing music together. Likewise, when it comes to trying to extract a meaning from an ongoing conversation, one should not give anyone of those who are part of it the credit for bringing up meaning to the talk, for meaning comes out as a result of the merging speeches that interlocutors say. The case also applies to textual dialogues, and written stories. In literature, such technique has been the subject of interest of Mikhail Bakhtin, who initiated a multi-linguistic and multi-voiced research over heteroglossia, dialogism, and polyphony.

2.4.1. Heteroglossia

This concept has been first introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin. It is about the use of different languages and accents in one literary body. The most common type which witnesses a frequent use of this technique are fictional polyphonic novels, plays, or short stories. Such works opt for the employment of such technique to emphasize the difference in the voices being produced by several characters from different backgrounds. It is important to note, however, that one character can be multi-voiced, or multi-dialectical (Leverkuhn, 2023).

Literally, heteroglossia stands for "differentiated speech"; throughout it, "the many meanings of each word are constructed since associations, connotations and histories are embedded within the context" (Saatsioglu, 2010, p. 23). The multiplicity of voices resulting

from such technique is a double-edged sword; it can be both positive or negative. Either way, meaning would be infected (Leverkuhn, 2023).

2.4.2. Dialogism

It all started with De Saussure's structuralist school which could not see texts more than mere entities, enclosed upon their own selves, -their own meaning and their own structure-. Since every action is sentenced to a reaction that should respond to what the precedent adversary initiated, post-structuralists came to debunk Saussure's ideas by claiming that what structuralists held regarding the closeness of texts is erroneous. Under the same umbrella, Derrida introduced his deconstructive views (Mouro, 2014).

In fact, the whole poststructuralist school is believed to have elaborated on Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas, a Russian theorist and philosopher who, Julia Kristeva reckons, "began the deconstruction of character and mimesis, thereby invalidating Russian Formalism's assumptions of representation and transcendence and becoming a precursor of poststructuralism" (qtd in Thaden, 1987, para. 01). In other words, an intersection is believed to exist between what Bakhtin held and poststructuralism in general, and deconstructionism in specific (Mouro, 2014), although at the same time, he is also believed to have remained humanist all his life (Brandist, 2000).

Long time ago, 'dialogic' was one of the features of novels where conversations are conducted directly between characters, and therefore their scripts were expressed through dialogues. Later on, Bakhtin launched its use for novels excluding absolute realities rooting their references in unique sources. Such novels introduce characters telling reality as they see it, each according to his/her own perspective. Then, dialogism jumped out of the literary circle to become a general term holding that meaning is the outcome of the various conversations that people undertake (Maine & Wegerif, 2021).

Bakhtin's creation of the new meaning of Dialogism is traced back to his anti-monological views upon novels penned by Dostoevsky (Nesari, 2015). The latter is considered as the forerunner of the polyphonic novel, a type that is made up of free multiple voices (Wellek, 1980). The Russian theorist's disbelief in single-sided interpretations of reality led him to write *Problems of Dostoevsky* in which he argued that "a monologically understood world is an objectified world, a world corresponding to a single and unified authorial consciousness" (qtd in Nesari, 2015, p. 642).

By definition, 'monologism' is a term coined to novels whenever they put to the fore a single point of view with the aid of multiple means (ibid). In other words, it is generally a "one speaker discourse". This conception denotes abandoning writing scripts in form of dialogues, or similar types. Hence, monologism stands for a unity of truths, also referred to as universal truths. Such thinking was not recent during Bakhtin's time. Rather, it was only reminiscent of the common thinking of the age of European Enlightenment which contradicted that of medieval ages where truth was denounced and replaced by "satiric dialogues" (ibid, p. 643).

In fact, monologism was endorsed during the Stalinist Era as it was a manifestation of monopoly and dictatorship. Only one meaning reigns in literary texts, and only a sole social category is able to announce truths; it is that of politicians -in the name of Joseph Stalin-. What the rest have to do is obeying, embracing those mono-sourced truths, and not questioning their truthfulness. Dialogism was a refuge to Bakhtin and his revolutionary fellows.

In literature, through the employment of dialogues between characters holding different perspectives, the multi-sided truth idea floated to the surface. However, it was such a controversy at that time as it allowed various views to co-exist in literary works, an act of freedom that was banned during Stalin's presidency. Therefore, as far as monologism left out

"the differences that may be present among distinct individuals" (ibid), dialogism adopted liberty of thinking, freedom of expression, and multi-faceted truths (ibid).

According to Bakhtin, dialogism stands for "any utterance, whether spoken or written, that people use in communication with each other" (Bakhtin, 1986 - qtd in ibid). It is, Then, a narrative technique that supports individuality as it allows the co-existence of conflicting views. In this respect, Ali Jamali Nesari, a researcher, jotted down, "in dialogism there is always room for arguing since questions show everybody's point of view rather than the universal truth" (ibid).

2.4.3. Polyphony

In the language of music, 'polyphony' is the label of "a musical texture that features two or more equally prominent melodic lines played at the same time. Each of these lines can be thought of as a melody in its own right -- one that could be sung, played, or listened to independently of the others" (Payne, n.d., para. 01). Nevertheless, "it is the combination of the different strands, all interacting together, that creates polyphony" (ibid).

On a parallel track, in the language of literature, polyphony refers to a type of narrative devices that are exclusively existing in prose writings. This kind of devices encompasses conflicting views where no one is privileged including the author whose voice weighs an equal weight as the rest of characters on the same narrative scale. Those clashing views are not included by the author necessarily with the intention of exposing them to filtration, or to come up with one answer or a unique resolution (Vallath, 2020). Rather, they are plainly shared as an initiative of support to, or an answer to an urgent call for, maintaining peace in the presence of incompatibilities inside of one literary chest (Kakabadze, 2010).

In fact, Kakabadze -writer and activist- draws farther horizon lines to the concept of polyphony. In his article, he mentions that the term can be applied upon many other aspects of

life. In fact, the literary explanation of it stems from a political projection of it onto the field of narratology. In other words, the twentieth century was a period of massive wars in its first chapter, and a time of turmoil in its second one. Such political conflicts that took over the world are rooted in a traditional will of superiority, power, and rejection of dissimilarities (2010).

Thereupon, understanding that disputes only lead to more losses and scars, humans started to learn to appreciate differences. Contemporary politics is turning towards "a multi-polar world of twenty-first century" (ibid, para. 03), where power is the right of every seeker, no nation has the right to forcedly take control of another one, and variations are increasingly cherished and respected. One result of such thinking appeared throughout the establishment of European Union, an organization in which several countries are joined and respected equally regardless of their distinct political weight in the world (ibid).

The same example of the Union is applied to polyphonic narratives in literature, where several voices collide in one text. No voice is meant to be privileged upon others, even that of the author; all are collaborators in sketching the message of the narrative, and everyone is a paramount part that constitutes the general meaning of the text (ibid). Wassila Mouro mentions, in this regard, that polyphonic works are constructed upon the use of "the simultaneous combination of parts or, here, voices". Such texts, she proceeds:

> consist of the objective, authorial voice presenting the relations and dialogues between characters but a world in which all characters, and even the narrator him – herself, are possessed of their own discursive consciousness. [It] presents a world in which no individual discourse can stand objectively above any other discourse; all discourses are interpretations of the world, responses to and calls to other discourses (2014, p. 19).

Overall, like dialogism, polyphony is a term that has been initiated by Mikhail Bakhtin. In fact, the term does not only apply to variant voices in a same text. It also considers the creation of multiple works whose characters and ideas follow different streams and adopt

distinct ideologies. For this, and although there exist many other authors whose works embraced the same philosophy as the Russian novelist, William Shakespeare and Honoré De Balzak amongst others, Bakhtin sticked to Dostoevsky as an example. The latter's different works are considered to be the first to introduce various characters, each observing the world his/her way. Instead of regarding their differences through a weary outraged loop, those distinctions were looked at dotingly (Kakabadze, 2010).

In point of fact, such a narrative feature that Dostoevsky utilized made a leap in the world of literature in a time of 'grand narrative' monopoly where dichotomies like 'domineering/dominated' were common when classifying literary products. Polyphony, through its multi-instrumentalist nature revoked the ascendancy of both communist and capitalist works, and paved the way for plurality -where all works receive the same light- to proliferate. In this regard, Kakabadze argued that polyphony lies upon the idea that "not everything is subservient of the main, great narrative of progress, but it exists regardless of it" (ibid, para. 09). Previous attempts to aim at developing great narratives and its existing conceptions were immediately replaced by "coexistence and interaction" (Bakhtin, qtd in Patterson, 1987, para. 04). In Kakabadze's words, under the roof of polyphony, "There is no GRAND Narrative, but the voices are co-existing just like in Georgian polyphonic music, and there is no domination by one side—in short this is the world. Contradiction is part of our world and we need to learn to coexist with contradictions and differences" (2010, para.09).

Unlike Kakabadze who externalized polyphony, Christian Plantin -a theorist and a linguist- internalized it. In his essay, he tackled the existence of a multiplicity of internal conflicting voices belonging, but not necessarily restricted, to the same individual. For this, he gave the example of 'monologues" (2021). According to Plantin, "the word *polyphony* can be used metaphorically to designate a set of phenomena corresponding globally to the *monological staging* of a dialogue situation, in the mouth of a single

physical *speaker* (Ducrot, 1988), called the *animator* of speech, in Goffman's vocabulary" (2021, para. 11).

Using alternative expressions, Christian likened the situation of a narrative where one character generates various voices to a 'one show man' where a single person plays multiple roles, each time the actual character is embodying changes, his voice shifts as well (ibid). Also, Plantin compared the situation to an animator "who can develop a two-sided discourse, staging two voices, articulating arguments and counter-arguments, as in a regular argumentative two-person interaction" (ibid, p.14).

According to the observations of Saatsioglu -a researcher in the field of literature-, polyphony, 'multi-voicedness', and polyvocality are interchangeable terms that usually happen to exist synchronically in narratives. The researcher has also tackled Bakhtin's work entitled *The Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* in which he divided literary works in terms of narrative features and found out two classes, the polyphonic case and that of subordination. In this respect, she stressed the fact that the multiple clashing voices in polyphonic narratives do not follow a 'domineering/dominated' system. Such texts are democratic in the way that power and importance are divided equally between characters and narrator(s) whose lives and intentions can only be known through each one's voice. On the other front, she explained that whenever dominance is found in a narrative, then a case of subordination must be found. It is noteworthy to mention that because voices are what make up a conversation, then scrutinizing polyphony actually leads to examining Bakhtin's previously mentioned concept: 'dialogism' (Saatsioglu, 2010).

2.4.3.1. Bakhtin's Dialogical Devices

To understand how polyphony works, an acquaintance with the dialogical devices that Bakhtin suggested would be a must. Notably, those devices are the narrator's voice,

character's voice, stylization, narrator's narration, and incorporation. Initially, the first one stands for first-person narration, which is the voice of the one who narrates. That same one's role is to delineate the story's themes as well as creating dialogism. The following one is that of characters' voices which actually form a cocktail of alternative personifications of the voice of the narrator.

In fact, voices of characters are the elements that make up dialogism (Saatsioglu, 2010). Another device is that of stylization which seeks to immerse in the space which lies between the 'told' and the 'untold' to decipher the "dialogic relation" (ibid, p. 34) between the two, and to push "seemingly innocent utterances [to] reveal their hidden ideology through the act of borrowing, imitating, and appropriating" (Park, 2009, p. 47). Then, another dialectical element that the Russian philosopher mentioned in his work on dialogism is that of narrator's narration, which is usually referred to as *skaz*, a Russian equivalent for the previously mentioned device. The latter presents writer and narrator in a way throughout which filtering one voice from the other would be an easy task. This easiness stems from the nature of the speeches of the two, in which differences in accents and consciousness would be spotted. Last but not least, a final device, and the most paramount among the others, is 'incorporated genres'. As its name denotes, it is a device that allows merging multiple genres in a single work in the form of a novel. In a novel, poems can be inserted, short stories, or even scenes from drama.

Bakhtin named the previously mentioned group as artistic genres (Saatsioglu, 2010). Another group that he mentioned was the extra-artistic one which covers "everyday, rhetorical, scholarly, [and] religious genres" (Bakhtin, qtd in ibid, p. 34). It is actually this hotchpotch of artistic and extra-artistic genres that offers polyphonic novels a polyvocal nature (ibid).

2.4.3.2. Chronotope

In polyphonic novels, the timing and spacing of the utterances that interlocutors produce are of utmost importance. According to Bakhtin, "when and where something is voiced is equally important to what is said" (ibid, p. 35). Time and space were labelled 'chronotope' in the works of Mikhail who believed that such a conjunction has a strong bond with the polyvocality of polyphonic novels. Throughout a long essay, Bakhtin also linked chronotope to unveiling much about both events in history and people. This firm belief in the connectedness of time/space with events stemmed from Bakhtin's interest in Einstein's theory of relativity which draws direct links between events and time. Endeavouring to stress the existence of a similar situation in literation, Bakhtin created 'chronotope' as a literary equivalent term for the scientific theory of 'relativity' (ibid).

Saatsioglu argues that chronotope is "related to the ways of perceiving experiences … To the link between artistic imagination and reality" (ibid, p. 35). The way things are considered and the conclusion made upon them alter in response to time's alteration. Bakhtin went further through his firm belief that "time "thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history" (Bakhtin, qtd in saatsioglu, 2010, p. 36). Thus, chronotope is a paramount conception which was found "to study the relation between time, spatiality and text, which is in a way making a historical and social analysis of a narrative" (ibid, p.36).

For Bakhtin, chronotope identifies the genre of the work. Based on that, he determined six types of novels in which stories are driven by different chronotopes. According to Sophie Raine, a doctor in literature at Lancastre University, chronotopes are two classes: minor and major. Minor chronotopes include 'threshold', 'castles', 'roads', 'provincial towns', 'salons' and 'parlors'. The major chronotopes, however, are six, similarly to the number of types they define.

The first one is the Greek romance where the story usually revolves around a couple falling in love, going through obstacles, and then linking up and marrying by the end. Such stories are confined between two moments, that of the meeting of the couple, and that of their marriage. The time in between is empty, and it is called 'adventure time' in which no change is believed to happen both at the level of events and in charters' identities (Raine, n.d.). Places that have been spotted in such stories are usually "foreign, indefinite, alien, or unknown settings" (Saatsioglu, 2010, p. 37). It is noteworthy to mention that his type is also known as the adventure novel of ordeal (ibid).

The second type is that of adventure novels of everyday life. Such novels are known for incarnating the theme of metamorphosis. Thus, this type emphasizes the shifting points that characters go through; their moments of 'crisis' and 'rebirth' as mentioned by Bakhtin (ibid). The third type is the biographical one. Although its name denotes its inclusion of exact historical realities, still the writer can play with details and so he can do with characters' perspectives (Raine, n.d.), as it has been done in *The Forty Rules of Love* by Elif Shafak. The fourth one is the chivalric romance, a type known for hyperbolizing time, "hours are dragged out, days are compressed into moments" (Bakhtin, qtd in Raine, n.d., para. 12). The fifth one is the Rabelaisian novel where events usually occur in public spaces like "fairs, markets, and, most importantly, the carnival" (ibid, para. 13). This type is known for hyperbolization of settings (both time and places). Last but not least, there is the idyllic type whose chronotope could be tied to enclosed spaces and folkloric time (ibid).

2.4.4. Polyphonic Dialogism

All in all, polyphony and dialogism are two sides for a one Bakhtinian coin. The two sides together are what makes that coin. Polyphony sets free the voices of the different story's characters, involving readers in the dialectical exchange between characters, granting them a feeling of involvement to the different conversations in the narrative. At the same time, it

combines them in one narrative plot (ibid). That is to say, "Just as polyphonic music combines melodies to create texture and tension, the polyphonic novel collects a multiplicity of distinct, often conflicting voices around a single place, family, object, or idea" (Lukas, 2013, para. 03).

This way, polyphony "widens the novel's geographic, psychological, chronological, and stylistic range, while simultaneously focusing its gaze" (ibid). Dialogism, on the other side, takes care of the meaning that results from applying the polyphonic device. Thus, Bakhtin concludes, "without polyphony (multi-voicedness), dialogism is impossible" (qtd in Saatsioglu, 2010, p. 32). Also, there is no way one can know the way the former works without scrutinizing "Bakhtin's dialectical devices" (ibid, p.33) which "organize heteroglossia through various literary techniques such as character speech, first-person narration, *skaz*, stylization, and incorporated genre" (ibid).

2.5. Conclusion

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a worldwide rise of awareness. This awareness was at every aspect of life. Not only it changed the way people see the world, but also their inquiries, inclinations, and interests. Common questions at the time were about reality, this life's mystery whose secrets are infinite yet no more needing to be revealed; rather, reality to postmodernists was triggering and urging to bring to life more queries. In other words, asking was more important than finding responses, and a break with all what is traditional was the trend.

All Those shifts that the postmodern life caused were rather considered as a renewal, and they were also reflected on the literary arena. The impact of such changes was outward and inward (in terms of structure and in terms of content). In fact, change was incarnated

throughout a number of devices, a shift in the narrative system, and a departure from clear-cut imaginary fiction.

Pastiche, temporal distortion, paranoia, techno-culture and hyperreality, magical realism, irony and black humour, alienation, ideological deconstructivism and relativism, Social hypocrisy, feminist dualism, techno-culture and the hyperreal, intertextuality, metafiction and historiographic metafiction, are the main lineaments and elements that characterized and were employed in postmodern writing. Pastiche is a device that allowed pasting different genres (poetical verses, drama scenes …) into one novel, temporal distortion was realized through the organization of events following a non-linear flow, the supernatural was expressed mainly through the employment of magical realism which merges a pinch of magic with reality. Irony and black humour were inserted to sarcastically tackle some issues that humankind faced prior to, and during, the age of postmodernism. Postmodern writings also expressed Kierkegaard's religious existentialism and applied his views regarding alienation and taking a leap of faith. Alienation is, actually, considered as a post-world war consequence whose infectious nature and real-life wide spread offered it a room in postmodern literature. In fact, alienation was not the only feature which was real-life based. Techno-culture and its resulting pop and culture of media as well as hyperrealism, besides the dystopian society of hypocrisy and feminist dualism were also reflections of the happenings of the time.

Works of fiction were no more separating themselves from reality; rather, they were reflecting to their own fictivity, a realistic move that serves as a tool of reminiscence for readers to remember that the work between their hands is a fiction. Such literary type is called metafiction, which -once merged with historical events or biographies- becomes historiographic. In its turn, intertextuality is one of the most prominent and recurring features of the period in which Kristeva's research about the matter was at the pinnacle of fame.

On another corner, in the same area, Bakhtin's thoughts on the linguistic and vocal structures of texts were receiving equal fame. The Russian theorist introduced terms like heteroglossia, dialogism, and polyphony. While the first term stands for surfing into the linguistic cocktail in a given narrative, the other two refer to its inclusion of polyvocality, also known as multiplicity of voices. The latter turns the narrative into a democratic space in which all voices are free, and everyone has the right to telling things the way they appear to him/her.

Another narrative instrument that witnessed a great use in the postmodern age was writing throughout multiple layers. Framing, embedding, or interpolating, are all names that were added to describe such kind of tellability. Embedded narratives are made up of embedded and embedding layers. It is important to point out that an embedded can also be embedding to another layer if the narrative included more than two strata. Embedding is not new, in fact. Its existence dates back to the oral tradition and the time of *Arabian Nights*. However, its intentional use as a device of its own was marked during postmodernism.

All in all, the previously mentioned devices, techniques, or narrative features are believed to have greatly served the evolution of novels. They all collaborated to add a special touch to the postmodern stories. Hence, it is no surprise that novels of that age are recognized for being the richest based on the claims of a wide legion of literary experts.

Chapter Three

Universalism,
Intra-Faith Binarism
and
the Postmodern
Narrative Democracy
in
The Forty Rules of
Love

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"Bountiful is your life, full and complete. Or so you think, until someone comes along and makes you realize what you have been missing all this time. Like a mirror that reflects what is absent rather than present, he shows you the void in your soul—the void you have resisted seeing. That person can be a lover, a friend, or a spiritual master. Sometimes it can be a child to look after. What matters is to find the soul that will complete yours"

(Shafak, 2010, p. 192)

3.1. Introduction

Like a womb carrying a baby, like a frame creating space for its picture, or like a cocoon bundling up the young silkworm, a couple of stories in Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* were unfolded in an embedding/embedded narrative format. Onto a pair of orbits, occupying distant spaces, traced over distinct timings, happenings instinct with forty maxims upon life and love were poly-echoed in the novel's universe.

Elif's work was both historiographic and metafictional in nature, the thing that confined it into the historiographic-metafictional type of novels. Such narratological genre proliferated during the postmodern age which also witnessed the presence of many other writing features. Merging poetry into prose through pastiche, breaking the linearity of time through time distortion, and expressing feelings through linguistic pauses and silences, were all postmodern flavours that the Turkish writer utilized when embroidering her narrative layers. Also, Shafak added a pinch of magic, gave credits to other artistic and literary creations, and blended feminist notions into the stories making up the novel. Besides that, she pictured the dystopian post-war Western society of technology, media and culture, full of maladies, ironies, and collective hypocrisy. Such society was pictured as materialistically perfect. However, it witnessed an ideological decay and spiritual void, just like the Eastern society during the thirteenth century. Thus, ideological deconstruction, religious relativism, and spiritual re-construction had room in *The Forty Rules of Love*.

In fact, Shafak's work comprised characters from different cultural and ideological backgrounds. Non-believers and extremist-practitioners survived together in the novel. Between the two, Sufis were presented as universal messengers of peace. Sufism was referred to as the religion of love, a reconciliating version of Islamic spirituality, shaped to fit the spiritual needs of other characters. In this vein, Shams and Aziz were instrumental in helping characters like Rumi and Ella to take a leap of faith and engage into spiritual journeys seeking for essence.

Hence, in light of Jung and Sinclair's views upon multiple modernities and Saba Mahmood's works on modern subjectivities and Islam, throughout the loop of postmodern narratology and embedding, and via the scope of Bakhtinian theories upon polyvocality, this chapter will sail into the life stories and aesthetics of Elif's seminal work. A comparative and qualitative scrutinization of the narrative texts is, thus, going to be conducted, for the purpose of unveiling the utilities and flaws of the overall narratological style that Elif employed.

3.2. *The Forty Rules of Love*: Abridgement

The Forty Rules of Love, a postmodern work, metafictional and historiographic, delineates life stories throughout paired layering and multi-faceted weaving. While the first layer recounts the journey of self-transformation that Ella went through, the second one tells about Rumi's life-shifting encounter with Shams of Tabriz. Shuttling between layers, shifting from one facet to another, and drifting between times and places, the novel unfolds spiritual notions, breezes of change, and reflections about life, language, differences, and love throughout the forty maxims of Sufism.

3.2.1. The Embedding Story in a Nutshell

Initially, Shafak's seminal work breaks out in the Spring of 2008, with the twenty-first century frame story of Ella Rubinstein. Ella is a forty years housewife, mother of three

children (Jeannette, Avy, and Orly), and wife of a well-known dentist. The frame narrative is labelled after Ella's name; this is because the whole story is about her, and because all the other characters are presented via their connection with Mrs. Rubinstein.

Ella was portrayed as a caring mother, to the point of being considered overprotective at times, unsociable and traditional. Kitchen was her lone outlet, and cooking was something that she fancied. Most importantly, Ella was an unadventurous homebody, neither she tries to engage into new adventures, nor she steps out of her comfort zone. Even a small step like starting a new job as a report writer in a literary agency was something that she would not have taken if her husband did not interfere. Even when she was accepted, she was about to abandon the whole thing. Surprisingly, however, she did not, and this was actually the gate throughout which she would step out to become a new version of herself.

Jeannette is Ella's firstling. She is pretty, stubborn, and zealous. Jeannette studies at Mount Holyoke College in which she loses her head over Scot, a student at college as well, and most importantly, a Christian! At "a late family lunch on a Saturday afternoon" (ibid, p.05), when the small Jewish family were having their casual meal and talk exchange along with Aunt Esther, Jeannette happily revealed her love affair as well as her intention to marry Scot. The young girl expected a flattering reception of the news from the part of her parents. Nevertheless, her announcement tuned the motion around the table into stillness and silence. Then, silence was broken, and a cultural quarrel between Ella and her daughter took place.

Orly and Avy, Ella's second place children, are a girl-boy twins, about seven years younger than Jeannette (ibid). The sister-brother teenagers are close to their elder sister. This appeared from their behaviour after the refusal that Jeannette faced when she shared her marriage plan. Orly and Avy left the table right after their sister, as an act of repudiation to the parents' reaction to Jeannette's news (although Shafak claimed that their depart from the table's meeting might only be interpreted as an expression of weariness from the long adult

talk taking place out there). While Avy was portrayed as a hyperactive cynic boy who does not perform well at school, Orly was pictured as a girl teenager, having "bad eating habits" (ibid, p. 14), anxious about getting more weight, and so obsessed by counting calories every meal she has. Later on in the story, Ella discovers that her daughter was bulimic. Out of terror from getting weight, she had the tendency of vomiting each time she eats a considerable amount of food.

David is Ella's husband. As a father, he was portrayed as an "open-minded and cultured … avoiding negative remarks about race, religion, or gender in the house" (p. 09). As a husband, however, he was not ideal. In fact, David was a philanderer. Yet, although he constantly had relationships with other women, he always sticked to his ritual routine as a husband and father the way he remained committed to attending the daily dinner meetings gathering his small family, as well as the way he happily and satisfyingly devoured whatever his wife cooked, not missing to express appreciation to her cooking efforts. In fact, Ella has always felt that such recognition that her husband kept expressing sounded like nothing but an apology for betrayal, or a handkerchief that he used to drop out upon his possible bit of feeling of guilt occasionally showing around in his mind for the same reason (Shafak, 2010).

Besides the previously mentioned members, a dog shared home with the family for about a dozen of years. His name is Spirit, but his health starts to be wrecked by the beginning of the story; then, the dog dies. Spirit's death left Ella distressed and forlorn as the dog was the only one with 'whom' she spent time when everyone drove past their educational and professional lives. Besides Spirit, Aunt Esther used to pay the family occasional visits. Her presence in the story was actually peripheral. She only appeared in the beginning of the story, where she took part in the meeting in which Jeannette announced her marital plan (ibid).

Likewise, Michelle's presence in the story was only captured to pave the way for "Sweet Blasphemy" to be unfolded (Shafak, 2010). Michelle is a young assistant in a literary

agency, run by Steve, a man whose name was uttered only once during the first call between Ella and Michelle. The latter gets in touch with Ella to remind her of the task she already asked her to be in charge of, that is, analysing a book penned by Aziz Zahara, a freshman writer from Amsterdam. "Sweet Blasphemy", by Zahara, was Ella's first product to write a report about for the agency. Michelle informs the forty years lady that a period of three weeks is going to be her deadline for submitting the required task. During the same call, Steve's assistant does not miss the opportunity to remind Ella that hiring her is a shot that she should seize, because such a job in a famous agency is rarely offered to less-young ladies with a C.V. almost void of experience. In fact, Shafak mentions in her work that the whole opportunity which Ella received was via one of her husband contacts, or mistresses, in more accurate terms. Michelle's name, later on in the story, is only mentioned when Ella checks her email, or when Ella weaves an excuse to move out of home to meet Aziz.

Watching the stability of her life at stake due to Jeannette's affair with Scot, Avi's bad grades, Orly's weight issues, and most importantly, her husband's repeated betrayals, Ella was going back and forth about doing the report. She, then, thought of abandoning her new job. To her, the whole thing was a going out from comfort zone, a thing that she has never had the courage for. Yet, she eventually found herself immersing into the thirteenth century story of Rumi, Muslim's Shakespeare.

"Sweet Blasphemy", which readers recognize throughout Ella, is actually the embedded story in the novel. It delineates stories from the lives of Jalal-Din Rumi and Shams of Tabriz, the companionship of the two Sufi mystics, as well as the reactions of people around them to it. It is also a narrative full of stories of people undergoing social rejection and prejudices as prices for getting into the mud of sins which, once 'visibly' accessed, take away social respect and prestige from accessors even in case of repentance. In fact, Zahara's novel was not the

only thing into which Ella was immersed, a relationship was also yet to be another business that the quadragenarian was engaging in ...

Via an email that she came across on the bottom of a web-page generated by Aziz, Ella started virtual messaging with Aziz. Verily, it is the latter's poem on that page which ignited Ella's interest in emailing the author she was supposed to write a report about. The poem is by Rumi. It is about favouring love, for "Without the sweet life of Love, living is a burden" (p. 43). Having a previous conversation about love with her elder daughter, where she tried to convince her of the uselessness of such immature emotions when it comes to marriage, Ella fell into epiphany when her sight spotted Rumi's short verses that Aziz left on his virtual page. She could not think of such words which popped up to her eyes in that special timing other than being a message, a call for something, or an invitation to plunge into a discussion with this mysterious writer whose words, though having no resemblance with what she holds, had a thread with what she was going through.

Ella emailed Aziz expressing her views upon what she has just read on his blog as well as sharing her issue with Jeannette with whom the Sufi author seemed to be on a same page. This email comes right after another phone-quarrel that Ella had with her husband after calling Scot to ask him for reconsidering his idea of marriage with her daughter. Vexed and irritated, Jeannette called her father to keep him in the loop about what Ella did, and to apprise him of her anger and unwillingness to talk to her mom. David, in his turn, informed Ella of his absence from the daily dinner meeting that he never missed, as an act of solidarity with his daughter, to point out to the extent to which Ella's call was undue, or maybe it was just as excuse for a possible romantic appointment that he might have had with a mistress, Ella thought …

On the next day, the woman in distress received Aziz's response. Throughout his email, Ella learnt that Zahara prayed for her reconciliation with Jeannette, and that he tied the prayer

to a wish tree. Then, the freshman writer advised Mrs. Rubinstein to start letting things go. He called this submission, which according to him, is synonymous to acceptance. Also, the man averred that love is essential. It is, as Rumi described it, like water, vital for everyone's life. A couple of days later on, Ella wrote back to Aziz. She thanked him, then informed him that his prayers have been answered now that her daughter forgave her after that the mom admitted fault and expressed apology.

Throughout few following weeks, messaging exchange increased, hearts started pacing for each other, and specks of love started to shine and sparkle between the two. Emailing grew to phone calling, which, in its turn, turned into an invitation for an onsite meeting. When the deadline for report submission approached, Ella asked for an extension, not for matters of unreadiness, but because she yearned for an extra-time of talk with Aziz, who constantly kept sharing advice and wishes with her along the woman's reading journey which synchronically happened to come with multiple events in the life of Ella, when the forty years woman was going through a mid-life crisis.

Quik and big was the change which occurred to Ella along her conversation with Aziz. Everyone noticed her transformation from a passive housewife to an on-going woman full of life. It did not take so much time for her husband, however, to discover her affair with the Sufi writer. Feeling that he had a hand in this, David invited Ella to a dinner where he revealed that he was aware of her relationship with Aziz, promised not to neglect her again, and asked her to be the old version she was. Ella, however, unveiled that she was in love with Aziz, and that nothing between her and her husband can be fixed.

Soon after that, Ella and Aziz met in Boston. There, their emotions became official, and nothing after that meeting became the way it was in the life of Ella. During her stay with the Sufi writer, Ella also learned that Aziz was suffering from cancer, and that the remaining period in his life was too short for him to promise her with a future. Yet, firmly deciding to

abandon her old life for the sake of love, Ella insisted to go with Aziz, leaving behind her marriage, social prestige, and her children. A month later, in Konya, where he chose to spend the remaining period from his life with Ella's company, Aziz died. For his death to be memorial, Ella arranged a ceremonial funeral where people from different cultural and religious backgrounds attended, and musicians played Sufi music. Verily, Aziz's funeral was "the craziest funeral Konya had ever witnessed, except for the funeral of Mawlana centuries ago" (Shafak, 2010, p. 348).

3.2.2. The Embedded Narrative: Summary

"Sweet Blasphemy", which has been woven by Aziz Zahara, is a book that Ella had to write a report about as part of her duties at the literary agency she was hired at. This embedded story in Shafak's bestseller takes place in the thirteenth century Middle East, another corner of the world in terms of ideology, history, and geography. This whole narrative, in point of fact, stands as a mirror on which Ella sees herself through Rumi, the West sees itself through the East, and the twenty-first century sees its reflection in the form of the thirteenth. Furthermore, the embedded story also stands as a tutor from which Ella learns, and as a guru whose impacts over her caused her to engage into a journey of self-transformation.

Mingled with the sections of the frame narrative, "Sweet Blasphemy" was unfolded in a polyphonic way throughout characters' sections, each telling about themselves and expressing the world around them the way it looks to their sights. The embedded story's protagonists are Jalal-Din Rumi and Shams of Tabriz. Both of Rumi and Shams were Sufi mystics. As similar as they were, however, the two men differed in their mysticism. A logical reason behind this was because of the difference in the way they acquired spirituality; while Rumi inherited it from his late father, Shams embraced it out of experience and self-reflection.

Before their meeting, Rumi and Shams were people having all they desired. However, both mystics felt a personal void which they needed to be filled. Shams had visions about the approaching of his death. As a matter of fact, he felt the need of looking for someone worthy to be offered what he knew and learned in life. During his stay in Baghdad with Baba Zaman, a holder of a dervish lodge, the latter received a letter from Seyyid Burhaneddin, a Sufi mentor and teacher. In his letter, Seyyid talked about the existence of a "talented and judicious" (p. 68) scholar in Konya, whose name was Jalal Din Rumi. Rumi was loved and respected among his people. He had everything someone like him desires, however, he always felt an unfathomable dissatisfaction. Mister Burhaneddin suggested that it is the absence of true companionship in Rumi's life which was igniting such inexplicable feelings of sadness in the mystic's heart, and therefore, finding he whom he can befriend would open his soul's doors "so that the waters of love could flow in and out" (p. 68). This way, Seyyid deduced, the void inside of Rumi's heart would be filled. Throughout this letter that he sent, Seyyid was asking Baba Zaman to help him make "two rivers meet and flow into the ocean of Divine Love as one single watercourse", so that he can feel the blessing of enabling "two good friends of God to meet" (p. 69).

In fact, mister Burhaneddin turned towards Baba Zaman for help because of a dream that Rumi was seeing recurrently. Based on that dream, Burhanuddin could tell that the companion that Rumi needed must be found in Baba Zaman's lodge of dervishes. Before enclosing the letter, however, the old man warned that he who is going to be selected to befriend Rumi must know that he might be facing some troubles. This is because "the person who is openly loved by someone who is admired by so many people is bound to draw the envy, if not the hatred, of others" (p. 69).

Although Baba Zaman had a feeling of who was going to engage in such dangerous spiritual journey, he publicly gathered his students and asked who was intending to go for it.

At the beginning, all the gathered dervishes raised their hands as a sign of approval for the request. Nevertheless, after pointing out to the perilousness of the mission, no one showed an urge for approval but Shams. Although Baba Zaman did not will to send Shams, the latter insisted, and after a couple of seasons of patience, the master set him free for the journey. Before leaving the lodge, Baba Zaman gave Shams a mirror, a handkerchief, and "a glass flask of ointment" (p. 87).

Shams headed towards Konya. Once he got there, he chose to wander in the town to hear about Rumi before hearing from him. There, he met a beggar, a harlot, and drunkard. First, Shams met the beggar, asked him about his identity, and gave him the silver mirror for him to always remember that he bears God inside his heart. In fact, the beggar took some time to recall his name, as it has been a long time since someone cared about calling or talking to him. When he finally realized that Shams was addressing him, he first said that he did not even care about having a name, then he revealed that he once had a wife and a mother who used to call him Hasan. Amidst their conversation, the two men noticed a harlot running from a gang of men trying to chase her to punish her for daring to enter the mosque where Rumi was preaching. Among the men, there was Baybars, a fanatic security guard whom Hasan knew. Baybars, following the steps of his uncle, referred to as "The Zealot" -or Sheikh Yassin- in the narrative, was harsh on those who did not show commitment to social standards, like drunkards and harlots. The paradox, however, was that Baybars used to drink, as he used to pay visits to brothels. In the brothel, his favourite harlot was the one he accused for attending Rumi's sermon; Desert Rose.

Amidst their rage and anger, Shams stood in front of the gang and stopped them from following the harlot. When he was yelled at for letting Desert Rose flee, he harshly criticised them all for trying to possess houses of God. Shams, later on, met that harlot and informed her with his feeling that she would one day join God's path. Although she doubted this to happen

regarding her past and current presence in the brothel, Shams expressed his firm belief in her purity. For this, he gave her a handkerchief that would always remind her that real filth is that which exists in people's inner realms.

At night, Shams also met a drunkard who was bleeding. It was "Suleiman the Drunkard". Shams hurried to help Suleiman. He also gave him the ointment he had, to help him cure his wounds. Shams noted, however, that the man had deeper inner wounds and that those were the wounds which one has to care about more. Taken by Shams' sympathy, Suleiman said that it was that guard called Baybars who beat him, saying that non-committed Muslims like him should always be treated like that. Believing that it is the right of no body to harm another one, Shams helped Suleiman to return to his house.

October 31st, from the year 1244, was marked by the meeting of Rumi and Shams. Heading back home, after finishing his weekly preaching, the great master met the dervish. Amidst the crowd, Shams addressed Rumi with an unusual question. "Which of the two is greater, do you think: the Prophet Muhammad or the Sufi Bistami?" (p. 156), Asked Shams. Puzzled and bemused, Rumi rhetorically asked the dervish why would anyone compare a messenger of God with an ordinary preacher. Shams explained that such question stemmed from two sayings that each one of the two stated. While Mohammed (peace and prayers upon him) apologized to God for not managing to know Him well, Bistami expressed satisfaction with his ability to fully know God.

Justifying the reason why he asked such a question, Shams was about to leave. At that moment, Rumi realized how subtle was Shams' inquiry, and as a response, he said that it all depends on what the person takes in his hands when willing to get from God's water of love. Bistami, Rumi said, must have taken a small container that he thought he got all the needed water when he had the container filled. However, Mohammed (peace and prayers be upon him) had a "bigger cup to fill" (p. 156), and hence, he never got water as enough as to quench

his thirst. Saying that, Shams smiled, and Rumi felt that the dervish was the one he recurrently saw in his dreams. That incident on the last day of an October marked the beginning of a lifetime companionship between Rumi and Shams of Tabriz.

As soon as the two befriended each other, Shams felt the necessity to teach Rumi the way he can get a wider container into which he can fill the biggest amount possible from the water inside God's ocean of love. For this, he put him into different critical situations to test his ability of submission and sailing into spiritual life, free from all types of life moorings. Such trials and tests, however, changed Rumi and costed him his reputation and social prestige, the thing that many of his surroundings did not appreciate, including Aladdin, his son. Consequently, thinking that he was no more than a heretic who built a wall between Rumi and his disciples, some of the town's fanatics in Konya started to plan for killing Shams. By the end, their plans regarding the fulfilment of the killing act succeeded. Such crime, however, could not drive Rumi back to his old life. Rather, it only fuelled the mystic's emotions to be ignited that he started writing poetry. Also, the great master continued the project he started with his companion upon the structuring of *sema*, the Sufi dance of dervishes.

3.2.3. Biography-Related Notes

In her novel, Shafak presented her own version of the life-time companionship of Shams and Rumi. For this, she also initiated her personal interpretations of the personality of Rumi as well as of that of Shams. Such interpretations were basically inspired from the bibliographical notes that she claimed to have used by the end of her novel, and thus, they mostly did not differ from the available historical data, previously discussed. Nevertheless, some fictional notes were believed to have been added by Elif. In this section, Rumi, his circle, Shams, and the blasphemies that he was blamed for were all laid down.

3.2.3.1. Rumi, Muslim's Shakespeare

Elif's description of Rumi followed what was recounted about him in the different bibliographies and throughout the works of the translators she claimed to have used for *The Forty Rules of Love*. Being the son of Baha' al-Din, Rumi inherited knowledge, fame and mysticism. At the familial level, Rumi was a loving husband and father. Spiritually and socially, he was both admired and respected. As a companion, he could not be more faithful. In fact, those features were verily reported about him in more academic sources.

Elif's work, however, pinched a touch of fiction in her version about the mystic through the addition of fictional characters with whom he interacted. Those characters unveiled features of tolerance and modesty in Rumi's personality. Besides those moral features, Shafak went further by providing physical descriptions to some characters including Rumi. In her depiction of his looks, Shafak said -through Shams in 1242- that he was a "middle-aged man with a kind face, broad shoulders, and deep-set hazel eyes" (Shafak, 2010, p. 27).

The Forty Rules of Love also pointed out to some of the works that Rumi penned. In fact, emphasis was on his poetical creations which he started giving birth to when grief after Shams' death turned him into a poet. First, it has been mentioned that Rumi started reciting *The Mathnawi* in 1252, four years after the sad assassination. However, it was until the death of Saladin, that the Sufi poet started writing it with the help of Husam Chelebi. This work was, actually, the first poetical creation of Rumi. Another book that Jalal-Din wove was *Ghazals*. Jalal's death was not part of the narrative as the story took place in the period that preceded his life's final episode. However, it was pointed out to when the funeral of Aziz, from the frame story, was likened to that of Rumi in terms of extraordinariness.

3.2.3.2. Shams of Tabriz: A Sufi … or a Heretic ?

Based on Elif's portrayal of the Sufi mystic, Shams was a wandering dervish, originating from Tabriz. As disputable as his personage was, the way sources reported about him, *The Forty Rules of Love* seemed to have taken the initiative to provide a portrayal that would clarify the misunderstandings that have been spread about Shams. The latter was good to everyone, humble about everything, but his actions and behaviour were miscomprehended by his surroundings. Similarly to what has been written in historical sources, he was known for his friendship with Rumi. However, in contrast with what have been reported in a number of sources, Elif's version says that it was Shams who educated Rumi about Sufi mysticism, not the other way around. Besides that, Elif is believed to have added a touch of fiction to the character of Shams, for he had the ability to envision future happenings and to talk to dead saints in the novel.

Like his companion, Shams was also physically described. Based on "Sweet Blasphemy", he was a man who "had no hair. No beard. No eyebrows. And though his face was as open as a man's face could ever be, his expression was inscrutable" (ibid, p. 155). Eventually, the death of Shams was also tackled. Like many sources reported, including the previously mentioned ones like Kaynat's research and Mustafa and Jaafar's article, Shams was a victim of a killing act. Although such sources did not provide well-detailed portrayals about the crime scene, *The Forty Rules of Love* offered an accurate description of it, as well as the whole journey that led criminals to commit such ugly felony.

3.2.3.3. Missions or Blasphemies?

Shams' search for a soulmate like Rumi was for the ultimate reason of offering his knowledge to the worthiest person possible. For this to be fulfilled, Rumi had to go over a number of examinations. However, what Shams called missions were considered blasphemies

for the surroundings of the two companions because of the nature of such tests. Shams asked Rumi to go to a tavern to buy wine, he also asked him to welcome a prostitute to his house, he burned his father's books, then they together arranged a special dance for Sufis. Those tests, Shams reckoned, were to get Rumi out of the ordinary enclosed world which outcasts people with lower social standards, to acquaint him with what Shafak called "the underbelly of society" (p. 152). Going to a tavern was to teach Rumi that lovers of God can sometime come in the personification of mistaken people like drunkards. Sheltering a prostitute was with the aim of aiding her to quit the brothel, burning books was with the aim of seeking for knowledge through experience and direct friction with the want-to-be-learned, while the spiritual dance was for expressing loss in the oneness with God. Shams was not a drunkard. It should be mentioned, however, that while he did not let Rumi taste the wine he bought, Shams drank half of a glass from it.

3.2.3.4. Females Around Rumi

Elif's novel witnessed the mention of four females in the Rumi's circle. First, although the part of Rumi's life, in which the story's events took place, was located in a period after her death, Gevher was pointed out to in the novel. Gevher was presented as Rumi's first wife who died young, after giving birth to his two elder sons, respectively named, Sultan Walad and Aladdin. Gevher, in *The Forty Rules of Love,* just like what was mentioned in multiple biographies speaking about her, was loved by Rumi that people thought he was never going to be able to marry another time out of grief after her loss.

However, Rumi married another time. His second wife's name was Kerra. She was a loved wife and a good step-mother. Kerra, in the novel, was introduced as a Christian who converted to Islam, an information that was not actually found in the biographies which have been used by the writer of this dissertation. Kerra had a son and was expecting a baby that Shams predicted to be a girl. In other biographies as well, Kerra is said to have given birth to

a son and a daughter with Rumi. In *The Forty Rules of Love*, Kerra intended to name her expected female-baby 'Mary". Nevertheless, based on some biographies, her daughter's name was Maleka (Thomas et al., 2012). Fatima Khatun was also pointed out to in Rumi's last section. Being the wife of Sultan Walad, Saladin's daughter was close to Rumi who educated her and taught her *Quran*.

Other women who were found around Rumi in Shafak's narrative were Kimya and Desert Rose. Kimya was a gifted girl that Rumi raised and educated. Still fresh and young, the little woman died after her marriage to Rumi's companion Shams of Tabriz, leaving no children with her husband. Unlike sources claiming that Kimya married Shams forcedly, Elif's version says that the marriage was nothing but a fulfilment of her request. Kimya, based on Elif's version fell under the spell of Shams and drowned deeply into his love. However, such feelings stubbed with Shams' cold reaction to the young girl when she tried to have her marriage being fulfilled, the thing that caused her to be haunted by a serious depression after which she died. It was because of her death after getting married to Shams that the latter was accused of being behind her death among people living in Konya. Such rumours could not even be denied by Kimya as she lost the ability to speak out of grief and depression. It is likely due to this, that a number of historical sources still consider Shams being responsible on Kimya's death. In fact, based on *The Forty Rules of Love*, Shams indeed had a hand in his wife's death; yet, his interference was not the way people thought it was.

Like Kimya, Desert Rose had no blood kinship with Rumi. Moreover, the prostitute had no trace in the biographical sources that the present research delved into. Desert Rose, in *The Forty Rules of Love*, was only a harlot who refuged to Rumi's house after she converted to Islam to become a devoted Sufi woman.

3.3. East to West ... Past to Present: Rumi and the Aesthetic Journey of (Spiritual)Transformation

In one of her Ted talks, Elif Shafak claimed that she firmly believes that the contemporary time is of liquid nature (Shafak, 2017). Verily, the idea of liquid times is similar to the idea of globalisation. The link between the two is in the increasing hopes of both 'systems' to conjoin the different parts of the world, regardless of the difference between their miscellaneous cultures and various backgrounds, into one pot. This idea has also been laid and defended in *The Forty Rules of Love*. Equally, Elif believes in Deeb and Mahmood's multiple modernities and Jung and Sinclair's modern subjectivities, which all stemmed from the idea of the possibility of finding a common ground between modernity and Islam.

In fact, the Turkish writer is considered as a prominent ambassador of the MMSP, known for the creation of, and advertisement for, domesticated versions of Islam, i.e. 'Eclectic Sufism'. The latter has been long carried by Western writers and Orientalists who poured their inks out for the sake of turning Islam-oriented works to 'universal' creations which are either Islamic in skeleton but secular in spirit, or which are fully stripped away from Islamic notions. Those works were most of the time translations, their translators claimed, which underwent a journey of migration through which writings of religious leanings were reshaped.

Out of service for the MMSP and its resulting New-Age Sufism, Shafak introduced *The Forty Rules of Love*, a novel which highly served the Rumi phenomenon. The Rumi Phenomenon is concerned with the fame that the English translations of Rumi gained in the western area of the world, mainly in the American literary circle, since the publication of Coleman Barks' *The Essential Rumi.* Such translations were actually the basis upon which Elif constructed her work, the thing that exposed it to criticism in the Eastern area of the world, as much as it offered the novel fame and prestige in the West.

In the following section, an analysis of Sufism and the Sufi notions that *The Forty Rules of Love* carried is going to be conducted in the context of their linkage with Islam. For this, a number of translations that Elif relied on for the fulfilment of her work are going to scrutinized. Furthermore, possible reasons that led the writer to select those specific works, to present Sufism that way, are going to be touched alongside with some results.

3.3.1. Shafak's Sufism: A Cosmopolitan Religion of Love

Shafak took the modernized stream of Sufism as an ideology for her narrative flow. In this section, an analysis of the writer's definition of Sufis and Sufism is going to be provided. For this, the elements that make it up would be scrutinized.

Sufism was delineated via Aziz, both throughout his views and the path he took to become Sufi, and throughout the characters he inserted in "Sweet Blasphemy", mainly Shams of Tabriz. To all of them, Sufism was, first and foremost, about the present moment. During their correspondence, Aziz told Ella, "I am a Sufi, the child of the present moment" (p. 160). In his turn, Shams went further by considering that apart from present, all directions of time are mere illusions. Whenever the harlot expressed doubts about being accepted both socially and by God if she ever quit the world of prostitution for the sake of devotion and Islam, Shams used to say, "the present moment is all there is and all that there ever will be" (ibid, p. 216). That is to say, Sufism says that ignoring the past while working on the moment without being stressed about the future is key to self-improvement.

Sufis in *The Forty Rules of Love* also believe that human powers and control over things in life are limited, and therefore, all that they tend to do is *tawakkul*, the Arab equivalent of trusting God's plan and having a submissive attitude towards destiny, the way God drew it. In this vein, Aziz said, "When I became a Sufi, I promised God to do my part to the best of my ability and leave the rest to Him and Him only. I accepted the fact that there are

things beyond my limits. I can see only some parts, like floating fragments from a movie, but the bigger scheme is beyond my comprehension" (ibid, p.145). In fact, Shams believed that this ''principal'' stems from Islam, which is according to him all founded upon submission. He also believed that it is enough to have a sense of submission to be more Muslim than defiant Muslims (who defy God's plans). Submissiveness to Sufis is an inner power which needs more power than anything else to be possessed. In this regard, one of Shams' rules said, "submission does not mean being weak or passive ... Just the opposite. True power resides in submission, a power that comes from within. Those who submit to the divine essence of life will live in unperturbed tranquillity and peace" (ibid, p. 292).

Sufis in the novel also believe in the power of silence. Shams had the habit of immersing into silence for a period of days. To him, silence has the capability to transmit what utterances cannot. Also, he thought that silence is better than language and words, because linguistic utterances only fuel quarrels and misunderstandings. One of his rules, regarding this, said, "Don't ever take words at face value … That which cannot be put into words can only be grasped through silence" (ibid, p. 66).

Sufis should always be thankful to God. Whatever happens in their lives, good or bed, should not throw them into the sea of despair. One of Shams' rules in Shafak's narrative affirmed this, emphasizing the necessity to abundantly and continuously thank God, because "even when all doors remain closed, God will open up a new path only for you" (p. 73). Shafak, through Shams, said that "it is easy to be thankful when all is well. A Sufi is thankful not only for what he has been given but also for all that he has been denied" (p.73). Such thankfulness that those Sufis believe in stems from their full trust in God's plans and mercy.

Based on Elif's multi-layered narrative, Sufism is "the religion of love" (ibid, p. 163), and the forty rules of Shams are the principals of this religion. Love is a major principal upon which the Sufi ideology stands. It is the only thing in life capable of obliterating differences,

because "we are all connected in a chain of hearts" (p. 344), Rumi once said. Love cojoins humans of all colours and all religions and backgrounds and make them "brothers and sisters along the path" (qtd in Shafak, 2010, p. 159). Loving God is the supreme type of love. At the same time, it is the less complicated, because loving He who is perfect is easy than loving "fellow human beings with all their imperfections and defects" (p. 110). Combined with spirituality, Love becomes Neoplatonic in nature (Sadiq, 2006) and tuns to be a door to wisdom, and to knowing God (Shafak, 2010, p. 40). The mutual feelings that Rumi and Shams had for each other could, thus, be explained as a sample of Neoplatonic love, as those emotions were merged with spirituality and as such, they mirrored what Richard Hooker called "love for God" (qtd in Sadiq, 2006, para. 02). Notwithstanding, "Where there is love, there is bound to be heartache" (p. 278), Rumi held.

The Forty Rules of Love also covered the creation of *sema*, the Sufi dance of dervishes, also known today as *Mawlawi* dance. "One hand pointed up to the sky, the other hand pointing down to earth" (p. 270), dervishes move into circles. In the book, the dance was the creation of Rumi and Shams, and it received harsh social criticism, because dancing and music were among the worldly activities that mystics were not supposed to engage in. However, to Sufis like Shams, "the *sema* is a spiritual dance performed for love and love alone" (p. 272). It is worth mentioning that *sema* was at first male-dominated, then, Rumi opened the door for women to be among the dancers.

Drinking alcohol was not a big issue for Sufis in Shafak's narrative. Inside Hristos' tavern, drunkards together recited Al-Khayyam's poem. It was full of the use of the word 'wine'. When Suleiman the drunk noticed the kindness of Shams of Tabriz to him although he was a drunkard, he could not help not asking him about the way Sufis consider wine. Suleiman proceeded that he has always noticed the use of wine in Sufi poems. What he could not grasp, however, was whether such employment of the word 'wine' was for serving

denotative or only connotative purposes. As a response, Shams said "When a true lover of God goes into a tavern, the tavern becomes his chamber of prayer, but when a wine bibber goes into the same chamber, it becomes his tavern. In everything we do, it is our hearts that make the difference, not our outer appearances" (p. 141).

Sufis in the novel always had keys to closed doors. Whenever characters were stuck in troubles, Sufis came up with solutions. Shams helped Desert Rose, Suleiman and Hassan. Equally, he helped Rumi to find the missing piece which caused him to feel distressed a long time before his meeting with Shams. In the frame narrative, it was Aziz who saved Ella from dullness and despair she was plagued by.

The ideology of Sufism in the novel took a Buddhi shape overall. That is to say, to be an ideal Sufi, Rumi had to go through tests. Those tests were for the sake of purifying the mystic from what Shams called worldly moorings like "fame, wealth, rank, and even religion" (p. 290) which are nothing but "idols that stood between the individual and God" (ibid). the whole idea resembles the tests that Hindus and Buddhis go through in order to detach the self from worldly elements, including earth, water, air, fire and space (also labelled void) (Turner, 2022). Furthermore, the same elements that Buddhi and Hindu set were used to divide Shafak's novel. The latter is made up of five parts which were labelled respectively, Earth, Water, Wind, Fire, and Void.

Actually, such Buddhi and Hindu notions were also plain in the poems of Rumi. The works of the mystic also included other notions of what is known as 'eclectic' or 'new' Sufism, a type of Sufi preaching and ideology that -based on the previously tackled points- goes hand in hand with what has been unfolded through Shafak's narrative. New-Sufism is also known for religious domestication and linguistic deviation. In light of this, poems of Rumi -taking part in the novel- would be put under the spot in the following section.

3.3.2. Rumi's Poetical Versions: New Sufism Spotted!

By the end of her novel, Elif cited the works which she used for the realization of her double-layered narrative which was marked by the employment of poetical verses that were coined to Rumi. In fact, a simple glimpse at the list of translators that she claimed to have based her narrative upon is capable of telling about the shelf that the Turkish writer chose to shelter her work on. Although the Helminskies and Nicholson were known for their faithful translations of the Sufi guru, figures like Idris Shah, Franklin Lewis & Coleman Barks -whose writings were the most used by Elif- have always been well-known for the linguistic modifications and the religious eradication that they brough to Rumi's poems. Therefore, a more focused scrutinization over the inserted 'modified' interpretations reveals the extent to which meaning that Rumi's originals carried was damaged, and the direction it took to have room at the New-Sufi cocoon.

To begin with, Elif quoted Rumi when the following verses were stated in her novel,

> **"***Not Christian or Jew or Muslim,*
> *not Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi or zen.*
> *Not any religion or cultural system.*
> *I am not of the East, nor of the West …*
> *My place is placeless, a trace of the traceless"*
> (Shafak, 2010, p. 183)

This quote is actually one of the cobbled poetical lines that took part in multiple writings which claimed to be translations of Rumi, amongst which are Barks' *The Essential Rumi* (1995), who titled the verses as "Only Breadth", and then Barks' *A Year with Rumi* (2006), keeping the same title ("Only Breath"). According to Sharghzadeh, a simple look at the verses reveals the use of 'Zen", a culturally modern word, which is not believed to have existed during Rumi's days with the same cultural sense used in Barks' version (2021).

Therefore, a conclusion that could be drawn there is that the version above was re-scripted by a modern age writer who must have added his own touch to the work. Beside this word, taking the full version of "Only Breath" into consideration (see chapter one, pages 25-26), another modern term has been used in the poem. It is 'cultural system', a concept that has always existed, but not with such modern label that Barks used.

Furthermore, venturing into the sections of sources allows knowing that the bibliographical notes for such version are not accurate. An exclusion of an introductory line in the original equivalent of Barks' poem has been noticed, and here occurs the paradox. That first line that Barks seems to have missed says, "*What is to be done, O Moslems? For I do not recognize myself*" (Sharghzadeh, 2021), a verse throughout which Muslim readers were addressed. Such results show an alienation of the Islamic notions in Rumi's versions being advertised for as accurate translations in the West (Smith, 2021). At the same time, they are marked by the used of Buddhi and modernized terms, the thing that relates such poems to the new version of Sufism, known for being part and parcel of The Rumi Phenomenon.

Tolerating wine was also present throughout one of Rumi's versions in *The Forty Rules of Love*. When he was asked about what makes drinking alcohol wrong, providing that not all drunkards do harm and evil, Rumi responded:

"If the wine drinker
Has a deep gentleness in him,
He will show that,
When drunk.
But if he has hidden anger and arrogance,
Those appear,
And since most people do,
Wine is forbidden to everyone"
(Shafak, 2010, p. 241)

Saying that, Rumi related the dangers that drinking can bring to drinkers and only drinkers. "Wine is not an innocent drink" (ibid). It brings out the impulses that could only be supressed when someone is in a full state of mind. That is why people should keep away from drinking. However, no one has the right to judge drunkards for being blasphemous anyway. Such ideas domesticating the harms that drinking can bring, and dealing with its prohibition with tolerance, as well as the use of the wine-drinking-related vocabulary, per se, prove such poem not to be the faithful translation of a work by a committed Muslim preacher like Rumi.

Another set of poetical verses which were coined to Rumi in Shafak's book was,

"Choose Love, Love! Without the sweet life of
Love, living is a burden, as you have seen"
(Shafak, 2010, p. 43)

Throughout these lines, worldly love is portrayed as being necessary to ease the pain that life might cause. Worldly love is an important element in the culture of New-Sufism. Likewise, such love was the main theme in Elif's work. Hence, this could be noted as an additional point supporting a wide range of critics' claims of *The Forty Rules of Love* being a ground, fertile with principles of the so-called eclectic Sufism.

"*Love is the water of life. And a lover is a soul of fire!"*
(Shafak, 2010, p. 350)

For the closure of her novel, Elif chose to quote Rumi's comparison of love to water, in the sense that they both are necessary for life. This statement is part of "In BagI-dad, Dreaming of Cairo: In Cairo, Dreaming of Baghdad", one of the translated versions of parts from Rumi's *Mathnawi* that Coleman Barks cobbled in *The Essential Rumi*, which he penned in 1995, together with his colleagues John Moyne, Arberry and Nicholson. Actually, the verse

in Barks' version only says "the water of life is here" (Barks, 1997, p. 211). However, reading the lines which follow drives readers to understand that 'water' stands for 'love'. The second part of the quote is also an analogy throughout which lovers are compared to fire. What could be noticed from the full statement is its inclusion of two Buddhi elements, water and fire respectively. In Buddhi and Hindu thinking, "water [is] feminine and fire is masculine" (Grether, 2015, p. 47). Water and fire, together put, is a Buddhi and Hindu ritual which symbolises personal metamorphosis (ibid). Likewise, the forty rules of Shams put that love changes its adherers, and that those who remain the same under the spell of love have actually never loved. Thus, Shafak finished the previously mentioned statement by stating that "the universe turns differently when fire loves water" (Shafak, 2010, p. 350).

The two statements with which the closure of *The Forty Rules of Love* was marked, stand for the transformation that a male-female love can bring to the universe. Notably, however, such purely Hindu, or Buddhi, thinking is not believed to be what Rumi tended to deliver through his poems. According to Doug Smith, an independent doctor in philosophy and Buddhism, being a committed Muslim mystic, "Rumi is unlikely to use something he knew was expressing a Buddhi idea" (2021). Therefore, Elif's last quote is likely to be one of the versions that have been taken out of the Islamic context, the thing that places it within the New-Sufi types of writings which have pulled out Islam from Rumi's translated works gaining fame in the West.

The final verses with which Shafak brought down the curtains upon her narrative were not the only ones into which she inserted the phrase 'water of life'. In one of Rumi's sections, the following lines took part,

"Whatever you see as profitable, flee from it!
Drink poison and pour away the water of life!
Abandon security and stay in frightful places!
Throw away reputation, become disgraced and shameless!"
(Shafak, 2010, p. 290)

Water of life here refers to what is known in Hindu culture and Buddhism as external waters. For them, to succeed in reaching a high level of 'spiritual awakening', Buddhists have to leave out the four worldly elements (five in some sources) amongst which is water (Turner, 2022). Seemingly, the lines above represent Shams' teachings to Rumi. The former made the latter go through tests for the sake of perfecting his soul. In this vein, Rumi said, "in his belief that all idols that stood between the individual and God had to be demolished, including fame, wealth, rank, and even religion, Shams cut loose all the moorings that tied me to life as I knew it. Wherever he saw any kind of mental boundary, a prejudice or a taboo, he took the bull by the horns and confronted it" (Shafak, 2010, p. 290). The whole idea of trials on Rumi's journey of transformation is inspired from the Buddhi and Hindu traditions. Hence, that is another evidence that such lines are likely not to be for someone like Rumi. Furthermore, that was a double-faced element that put Elif's work on the New-Sufi path, this is because it combined the idea of self-transformation and Buddhi practices.

Similar to the previously mentioned set of lines, liberating the self from earthly things was also expressed through the following lines in Elif's novel,

"Brother, stand the pain. Escape the poison
Of your impulses. The sky will bow to your beauty
If you do…. That way a thorn expands to a rose.
A particular glows with the universal"
(Shafak, 2010, p. 188)

Throughout those verses, Rumi compared what Buddhis call 'worldly concerns' (Turner, 2022) to poison. For Buddhis, the presence of such concerns prevents people from spiritual awakening. Equally, Rumi's lines emphasize the necessity to escape them for things to turn out to be all beautiful and in harmony, in the eye of the transformed. Therefore, a similar conclusion to the previous one would be depicted from this poetical piece. Moreover, 'standing the pain' at the beginning of the first line can be understood as a type of submission that the poem calls for; something that is highly recommended by New-Sufis.

3.3.3. *The Forty Rules of Love* and The Rumi Phenomenon: Going Universal ?

For the sake of penetrating the Oriental cocoon to fly out to the universal literary sky, Shafak chose to join Barks and his fellows to the club of translators and writers standing in service for 'The Rumi Phenomenon'. In fact, Shafak is a leading epitome when it comes to speaking about the Sufi phenomenon as a whole, for the popularity of her work made of it a great contribution to the fame of Rumi and Sufism among Westerners, mainly Americans. Two among the most important reasons behind the easy access that Elif's novel had into America, were the universality of her work and the spiritualization of religion.

To Elif, universality was both a means and an end. In *The Forty Rules of Love,* she created a universal environment where characters from different backgrounds were included. Yet, although they were different, they could get along, befriend each other, love each other, and even marry one another. This made it easy to people who are different in language and faith not only to relate to the story's characters but also to feel at peace with the differences that the double-layered narrative unfolded. Thus, universalism as an end was achieved. For this, as well, the religion of Rumi, the one that Aziz and many characters converted to, was spiritualized. Spirituality was considered to be different than religion. While the latter had the tendency to be stricter and was stereotyped for being 'orthodox', the former was portrayed as more a flexible version. In this respect, Aziz once told Ella:

> Religiosity and spirituality are not the same thing, and I believe that the gap between the two has never been greater than it is today…In many ways human beings are becoming more self-centered and the world is becoming more materialistic. On the other hand, humanity as a whole is becoming more spiritual. After relying on reason for so long, we seem to have reached a point where we acknowledge the limits of the mind… Today, just as in medieval times, there is an explosion of interest in spirituality. More and more people in the West are trying to carve out a space for spirituality in the midst of their busy lives (Shafak, 2010, p. 145-146).

Based on that, it could be deduced that spirituality was an alternative to religiosity in the novel. Equally, Sufism was more of an alternative to Islam, not a sect deriving from it. Sufism was presented as a religion of love, perfect to be adopted by everyone willing to engage on a love journey, or a journey of self-transformation. Such secularisation of religion was presented to get to every believer, and to equally catch the attention of non-believers suffering from the spiritual void that materialism caused them to have (Furlanetto, 2013). The spiritual emptiness that Amira Zain referred to (Furlanetto, 2013), the one that Jerome Clinton also called "empty niche" in the American spirit (ibid, p.203), helped a work with domestic spirituality to access American readership; this is due to the materialisation and industrialization that invaded their lives, filling every aspect, and letting no chance for spirituality to flow-in (see chapter one). In fact, this point has been tackled in *The Forty Rules of Love*. Ella was the example of a person under the influence of materialism. Her life was a sample of a life that materialism creates. She had literally everything; however, there was a void that she was feeling inside of her soul, an empty corner which could not be filled with anything, until she found out Aziz and his book throughout which she could find the missing peace that she was looking for.

Actually, many critics think that Elif's work domesticated the Islamic identity in Rumi's writings. However, others claim that such 'appropriation' of Islam was necessary for it to re-access the West, and to echo the word of Islam and -although domesticated- some of its principles in the Western side of the world, mainly in America. It is noteworthy to point out

that it was not an easy task to create room -in the American literary market- for a literary work bearing Islamic notions, since the incidents of 09/11. However, through universalisation and religious appropriation, *The Forty Rules of Love* arrived to the Western literary shores nice and neat. In this respect, the case of Elif's work is believed to be a tool that the Turkish writer used for the purpose of what Edward Said called "dispelling the threat of Islam" in America, whose readers have been for a long time "traumatised by the events of 9/11 and subsequently exposed to the anti-Muslim discourses developed by the media in its aftermath" (Said, 2003, p. 87 – qtd in Seblini, 2021, p. 05).

It is a truth, partially acknowledged, saying that universalism in the work of Elif helped multi-cultural and multi-religious co-existence. Nevertheless, alongside that, it is precious to note that the same work has actually created inter-cultural binarism and intra-faith pluralism. Sufis, like Shams, were regarded to as a minority suffering from discrimination among other Muslims in the same Eastern Society (Baybars, his uncle, Irshad, and others, to name but a few). This is why, Seblini considers, that the non-Sufi-Islam that was presented in the novel was conventionally sketched through an Oriental eye, a presentation shaped according to the American eye, to suit and please the American audience. As a matter of fact, *The Forty Rules of Love*, Seblini deduces, "does not help in creating a transcultural narrative that speaks equally to both the West and the East". She also went further by considering that the work had "no intention of encouraging a transformation in the American culture and society". That way, through her novel, Selini reckons that Elif only nurtured "the American sense of centrality which is a benevolent form of control" (ibid, p. 06).

3.4. The Novel from Postmodern Lenses

Being a postmodern creation, *The Forty Rules of Love* was full of elements and features of postmodernism. In this section, using the postmodern loop, Shafak's novel is going to be scrutinized. The main aspects that are going to be targeted and touched upon are, respectively,

pastiche, time distortion, silences and alienation, techno-culture, the culture of media, the hyperreal, dystopia, irony, social hypocrisy, magical realism and postmodern feminism, religious relativism and leap of faith, intertextuality, as well as historiographic-metafiction and self-reflexivity.

3.4.1. Pastiche

When writing her novel, Elif pasted many literary genres in her work that it became a collage of a multiple forms and features of literature. Prose and poetry co-existed side by side in the narrative. The latter included a number of poems that characters wove. Rasha Dayekh thinks that Elif dedicated room for poetry in her book out of "anxiety of authorship" (Dayekh, 2016, p.1720). In other words, Shafak's initiative for such inclusion was a response to the rising voices claiming that such genres (poetry and drama) are male-dominated (2016).

The text also included both actual and virtual letters. Communication between Ella and Aziz started via e-messaging through email, a virtual platform. Then, when Ella finally decided to tell Aziz about her true feelings towards him, she has chosen to write a physical letter, in an "old-fashioned way, with ink, a perfumed paper, a matching envelope, and a stamp … to mail it to Amsterdam" (Shafak, 2010, p. 263). The novel also included verses from Quran, like that which was picked from Surat Al-Nisa, the one which says that, "men are maintainers of women …" (qtd in ibid, p. 196).

Based on the already mentioned definition that Mambrol provided world literature with, pastiche is also about blending literary features or schools like science fiction with detective fiction for instance (Mambrol, 2016). Thus, it could be inferred that pastiche was also performed in *The Forty Rules of Love* through the fusion of metafiction with history for the realization of a historiographic metafictional narrative. Also, it was performed by merging embedding with polyphonic techniques of narration to produce a story that is multi-layered

and multi-voiced, and by mixing spirituality, venture, and romance to pave ways for the story to reach out to people with different literary tastes and inclinations (Akbar, Asif & Nusrat, 2019).

3.4.2. Narratology and Time Distortion

Time distortion took part in the narrative, both explicitly and implicitly. Explicitly it was through the inclusion of parts aiming at breaking the notion of time being linear. Those parts furtively paved the ground for readers to both comprehend and accept temporal non-linearity being part and parcel in the postmodern writing. In this vein, one of the forty rules said "the past is an interpretation. The future is an illusion. The world does not move through time as if it were a straight line, proceeding from the past to the future. Instead, time moves through and within us, in endless spirals" (Shafak, 2010, p. 216). Implicitly, time distortion could be spotted by noticing the way the novel unfolded the different events and unveiled the various characters at the levels of both embedding and embedded layers.

Although, based on the dates of the principal layer (the embedding one), time was moving straightforwardly; narration in *The Forty Rules of Love* as a whole is considered to have been laid in a non-linear time-flow, overall. In fact, nonlinearity in this novel was performed in different ways, with the inclusion of different types of disrupted narrative styles, expressing time-disruption.

Time distortion was performed through the inclusion of flashbacks, flashforwards, and through a zig-zag-like flow. An example of flashback was when Baybars was recalling the genocides of the Mongol when he last visited the brothel. Another instance was when Desert Rose was remembering her infancy and childhood. Readers know Desert Rose as a harlot, then she takes them back to the past which made of her a prostitute. Moreover, Jackal Head's section in 1252, in which he went back four years in time to talk about the day he killed Shams, was also a flashback.

A flashforward was when Shams first met the patron of the brothel, and firmly told him that Desert Rose will leave the brothel in a way that seems as if he was already observing her going out from that place. A more important and plainer flashforward was the vision of Shams -see the section of *The Forty Rules of Love* and the Supernatural- in which the future scene of Shams' death was described. This description took place in the very first individual section of Shams, in the novel's first part 'Earth'. It was accurate, and it provided details about the timing of the crime, the way it was going to be, its scene, the one who was going to discover his (Shams') death. Even his feelings and those of the one who found him dead were pictured throughout the following words:

> There was a big house with a courtyard full of yellow roses in bloom and in the middle of the courtyard a well with the coolest water in the world. It was a serene, late-autumn night with a full moon in the sky […] In a little while, a middle-aged man with a kind face, broad shoulders, and deep-set hazel eyes walked out of the house, looking for me […] But then, […] he caught sight of my hand floating aimlessly on the rippling water like a rickety raft after a heavy storm […] The man fell on his knees, crying and pounding his chest. "They killed him! They killed my Shams!" (Shafak, 2010, p. 335).

Eventually, all of the details that were recounted through the vision have concretely happened, the thing that confirms it to be a prolepsis where the narrative made a leap forward in time before going back to its usual flow.

The storyline also kept shuttling between different time periods and eras. In other words, as it has been previously clarified, time in the narrative kept going back and forth through the inclusion of flashbacks and flashforwards. This was throughout the whole work, delineated throughout two narratives, confined into five parts, with different individual sections per each. Hence, in cases like this one, it could be said that narration was also delivered throughout a zig-zag time-flow.

It could also be said that the embedded story in *The Forty Rules of Love* has been woven using retrograde and cyclical types of narration as well. The retrograde flow-shape was

when the killer has first spoken almost four years after he committed the crime, giving flashbacks about that day and the way he was 'hired' to that mission. The killer started speaking in 1952, about the crime which took place in 1948, and then the section that followed was that of shams and it was located in 1942. This flow, going in the opposite direction of time, places the narrative at this level in the retrograde column. Moreover, the use of cyclical narration was noticed. The fact of putting the section in which the killer had those flashbacks at the very beginning of Elif's work as a whole, makes of the narrative's time-flow a cyclical one. The ending is found at the beginning of the storyline. Then, events go to their actual timing, until they reach the same end that has been unfolded at the story's departure.

Between that and this, the whole narration is believed to be of spiral type. For the storyline as a whole, at both of its layers combined together, time was not even the reference. The novel was actually divided into five parts, Earth, Water, Fire, Void and Wind. Each part included individual sections of characters speaking about actual moments, recalling past memories every so often, and envisioning future happenings at different moments. Likewise, the narrative time in the novel also kept going over spiral motions where plots "twirl in circles" (Boon, 2019, para. 08) until the story reached its ending period.

3.4.3. Silences and Alienation

Based on Marie-Laure Riyan's understanding of tellability and embedded narratives, silences can also be part of the stories' scripts. They can be embedded talks and ideas telling things in the story, and capable of influencing plots, as well as the flow of events (1986). Projecting that upon Elif's seminal work, the pauses and stammering of Ella while quarrelling with Jeannette and her husband about love and marriage, and when she was having her first conversation with Michelle on the phone, her silence towards her husband's question, the stillness which occurred when Shams and Rumi exchanged gazes for the first time, Desert Rose's silence when Baybars abused her the last time he visited the brothel, Aladdin's silence

when Kimya's marriage was taking place, Kimya's silence and stillness in different scenes with Shams, the huge lull she fell in after being rejected by him, and the silence which followed the war that Baybars was bragging about in one of his scenes with the harlot, to name but a few scenes, were all actually invisible lines telling more than what was delivered through the bold words making up the novel.

At times, such silences came out to tell about characters' confusion as it was the case with Ella. Sometimes, they were inserted to deliver feelings of disappointment and sorrow as in Kimya's case. At other times, they could be mental arrangements and plans that readers comprehend by reading the facial expressions that the text described. In this case, however, the sense of the silence cannot be fully grasped until such expressions are incarnated through actual deeds and actions as it was the case with Aladin when Kimya was marrying Shams. Silence was also a shield that Ella chose to hide behind in order not to confirm her doubts about herself being betrayed by David. Also, it was David's reaction and expression of the guilt he was feeling towards his wife's affair that, through his neglection and infidelity, he knew he had a hand in.

Silence can also refer to peace, a battlefield's relief from blood and wars. Such role was performed after that the war that involved the Mangol armies and Genghis Khan spelled its last breath. Via Baybars' words, the narrative unfolded that "the veil of silence [was] as soft and peaceful as a blanket on a cold winter night, that descended upon a battlefield after hundreds had been killed and wounded, and dozens more were about to give up their last breath" (p. 217). In a clear-cut voice, Baybars stated, "The silence that follows a massive disaster is the most peaceful sound you can hear on the surface of the world" (p. ibid). On another front, combined with alienation, silence in *The Forty Rules of Love* was also a religious practice that Shams asked for and Desert Rose sheltered to as part of their religious rituals through spiritual contemplation and devotion.

3.4.4. Techno-Media-Pop Cultures and hyperreality

Like many other postmodern works, *The Forty Rules of Love* was also marked by the existence of techno-culture as part of its frame narrative's general cultural sphere (Dayekh, 2016). The first-stage communication between Aziz and Ella was all in the form of email-texting, using the laptop; thanks to internet which enabled her to google the writer's name, and then to get his email which was dropped on his personal web-page. Then, with the development of their relationship, the couple exchanged calls before their first meeting in Boston. Call-exchanges also happened between Ella and Scott, Ella and Michelle, Ella and a hotel's administration, and Ella and Jennette. Techno-culture was also present through the use of cars and planes as means of transportation. Aziz's first wife passed away as a result of a car crash whose driver did not notice her presence at night when she walked out of her own car "in the middle of the highway" (p. 214). DVD was also mentioned in the frame narrative, and Ella thought of buying new ones to her twins. Washing machine and oven, two postmodern inventions, also took part in the text.

Last but not least, TV was also present in the narrative, and it is also part and parcel of the techno-culture. At the same time, TV also represents the culture of media, which proliferated during the age of postmodernism. TV was a medium via which Ella accessed programs on culinary art, scattered news about local happenings, and a documentary about Ethiopian famine. Media in the novel was tutoring, informing, and alerting, all at the same time. Through programs of cooking Ella learnt, throughout the famine documentary she learned about the suffering of the 'other', and throughout the news she was alerted that humanity is not at its best and that "endless dangers [are] looming in the world" (p.64).

Restauration, cooking, dieting, music, photography, cosmetics, alcoholism, as well as multitasking are all component featuring the social and cultural picture of postmodernism, which Nabila Akbar -along with her colleagues- conjoined under the umbrella of pop-culture

(2020). Throughout the different characters' lifestyles, all of these elements took place in Shafak's narrative. Ella and David had the tendency of going to restaurants from time to time. In the rest of the ordinary days, Ella practised cooking as a hobby, being a savourer of the culinary art. Among the plates she thought of making was Pasta which marked the international presence of an Italian dish on an American table. Despite the scrumptiousness of the food she makes, Ella's daughter, Orly, had eating issues for she was "suffering from bulimia" (p. 142). Ella herself was a stress eater. After her quarrel with Jeannette, then with her husband over calling Scott, she immediately "opened the fridge" (p. 54) as a reaction of her being "seized by the terror of being abandoned by her husband and daughter" (p. 54). About to devour "some cherry vanilla ice cream" (ibid), she paused, then she "took a step away from the fridge and slammed the door, a bit more harshly than necessary" (ibid) out of fear from "gaining weight" (ibid).

Ella was also melomaniac. She used to listen to pop songs like that of Doris Day's "Que Sera Sera" although she told Aziz that she does not relate to its words which are about letting things "go with the flow" (p. 144), something that she always considered herself unable to do. Other fingerprints of pop culture could be highlighted in the narrative. The postmodern appetite for photography was presented through Aziz, a nomad who fancied travelling and taking pictures. Aziz was, in fact, taking pictures also as part of his job as a photographer in a travel magazine. Not far from aesthetics, besides music and photography, scampering towards the cosmetic world was present through the presence of makeup in the narrative, as well as perfumes, both of which Ella has used.

Alcoholism was also employed by Elif in both of the interpolated stories making up the novel. Both Ella and David drunk wine in the frame story. In the nested narrative, one of the characters was even labelled after his habit of drinking too much; it was "Suleiman the Drunk". Even Rumi, although religious and mystic, held a bottle of wine and visited a tavern

where a discussion between him and Suleiman took place. Rumi considered wine not to be "an innocent drink" (p. 241). According to him, it is something which "brings out the worst in us" (p. 241), and therefore everyone should keep away from it although "we cannot blame alcohol for what we are responsible for" (ibid). Elif assumes, through all of this, that although it is not innocent, wine is innocent from the bad things the alcoholics and drunkards do under its illusion. Like Drinking, drugs' consumption also took part in the story. When his wife died, Aziz admitted that he became a drugs addict. as a matter of fact, he tried different types of marijuana, cocaine, hemlock, heroine, and even hashish.

In their turn, the use of the machines resulting from technological advances, that postmodernism witnessed, enabled Ella to get involved in different tasks, all at once. She was checking emails while cooking, or cooking and reading. This is what Nabila Akbar labelled as 'multitasking' which she also considers to be one of the fundamental results of pop culture. According to a research in which she took part, pop culture "has led humans in spending busy and on the go lives. It has forced them for getting involved in multitasking" (2020, p. 425). In support to her own claim, she put to the fore the example of Michelle, Steve's assistant who was very active (Akbar et al., 2020). On their phone conversation, Ella could form a mental picture of the lady "juggling several tasks simultaneously—checking e-mails, reading a review on one of her authors, taking a bite from her tuna-salad sandwich, and polishing her fingernails—all while talking on the phone" (Shafak, 2010, p. 12).

In a narrative where the culture of technology and pop-culture took place, the existence of Baudrillard's conception of hyperreality should be no surprise. As such, media's existence in the storyline allowed reflections about hyperreality to swift into Ella's mind. When she turned on TV in one of the scenes, for instance, she pointed out to the hyperreal presentation of cooking in media's culinary programs. In this respect, she wondered why "people who cooked on TV programs made it sound as if cooking was about inspiration, originality, and

creativity. Their favourite word was 'experimenting' […] Why not leave experimenting to scientists and quirkiness to artists!" (p. 62). In his turn, Shams has also pointed out to hyperreality by referring to imitating reality when he was reflecting about life, a night before meeting Rumi. In this vein, the dervish unveiled one of his rules which said, "Life is a temporary loan, and this world is nothing but a sketchy imitation of Reality" (p. 153).

3.4.5. Going Dystopian: The Rise of Unemployment, Poverty, and Prostitution

The postmodern age has always been condemned for being a dystopian place (Akbar, 2020). Many social scourges went viral during that age, which made it inevitable for writers of the era to tackle such issues. Like many postmodern works, *The Forty Rules of Love* drew attention to unemployment, poverty and prostitution (Akbar, 2020). First of all, the issue of joblessness was addressed when Michelle was urging Ella to read the work that was assigned to her, and to stick to the work she was hired for, being an opportunity that should not be missed regarding the existence of better requests from more qualified people to occupy it (p. 13). Aziz, as well, remained jobless after being a drugs-addict, right before starting anew as a photographer and a traveller.

Second, poverty was presented through Hassan the beggar who could not help questioning the existence of the lucky rich inheriting wealth and fame, and the luckless poor - on the other side, in the exact same world- who only inherits misery and suffering. Poverty was also a curse that followed Desert Rose when her father fell into depression after her mother's death. It was actually one of the dots in her life that drove her to enter the world of prostitution. Hence, Desert Rose not only presented an instance of poverty in the narrative, but also, she opened the brothel's gates to the readers of Elif's work, providing them with glimpses on the life of a prostitute; and yet, while doing so, she also offered them a free journey into her pure spirit, widening their sights about the truth that sometimes the destination one takes is not the one that he/she has loved.

3.4.6. Irony and Social Hypocrisy

Like many postmodern works unveiling the hypocrisy that society teaches and spread, *The Forty Rules of Love* unfolds many scenes communicating human and social hypocrisy (Akbar et al. 2020). Nonetheless, three of them stand as the most powerful. The first one of these scenes was that of David revealing his readiness for forgiving Ella after knowing that she betrayed him (Shafak, 2010, p. 249) . The paradox is that this same man spent years betraying his wife. When he told his wife that he knew about her affair, he admitted that he might have had a hand in that, not because he betrayed her, but because he neglected her for a long time that the void he left in her heart might have led her to do what she was doing. Never had he thought of his successive betrayals and their negative impacts upon her heart and feelings. It was until when Ella revealed that she was aware of his affairs that he promised not to be involved in any other relationship of that kind again. However, the man never uttered straightforward words of regret or apology for betraying.

Second scene was when Baybars kicked Desert Rose out of the mosque because of her being a prostitute. That same person was a faithful client to the brothel in which the harlot was working. Furthermore, Baybars used to pay visits to that place specifically for the sake of the prostitute he attacked during Rumi's sermon, as he had feelings for her. A third scene throughout which social hypocrisy was displayed was that of the people who attempted to kill Shams for he was accused of doing and speaking blasphemy; and yet, those same people did not pay regard to killing as an act absolutely criminal, evil and blasphemous (Akbar et al., 2020).

In fact, the previously mentioned storyline dots were double edged. Not only they undressed people's fake postures to unveil their ugliness and hypocrisy, but at the same time they were also ironic plantations stressing out the contradictious nature of society and those who make it up.

Based on Raymond Malewitz's definition and classification of the postmodern feature, Elif's novel thus included many instances of irony which are mostly of situational type. During their meeting in the restaurant, when David inquired about the reasons which led Ella to engage in an affair with a stranger, he expected them to be about neglection at first. Once his wife informed him that she knew he was betraying her, his analytical explanation of the matter sifted towards 'revenge'. However, when he asked her whether 'revenge' was the stimulator which urged her to undergo betrayal, she gave a response that was far different from what he expected. Literatim, she said "It is about love … I love Aziz" (p. 250). Saying so, Ella expected her husband to laugh, a sign of mockery on the forty years married mother of three children who has long ago abandoned having faith in love, something that she firmly expressed in the near past. This was the way David used to react to such things. Nevertheless, unexpectedly, David took her response with a serious concern reminding her of the three children they have. The same scene, actually, expressed an additional situational irony on top of the two already spotted ones. It is that Ella at that moment said what she never expected herself to say about love. Not very long from that point in time, Ella quarrelled with her daughter and asked her to stop thinking 'romantically' about love, the thing that she was actually doing in front of her husband who was seeking for explanations and outlets from the trap that the couple fell at.

In his turn, kicking her out of the mosque, beating and abusing her, Baybars expected Desert Rose to surrender and never think of approaching the path of God again. Flabbergasting it was, when he knew that what he did ironically turned to be what urged her to quit the ugly world of prostitution to become a devoted Sufi woman. The whore was rejected by followers of Rumi; and yet, ironically, it was inside his house that she found refuge once she run away from the brothel.

When a group of people planned for killing Shams, they thought that by doing so they would stop Rumi from writing poetry, organizing dance ceremonies, approaching people from socially-rejected backgrounds, and most importantly, they thought that they would make him forget Shams. Ironically, the result of their crime was the total opposite. By the wake of Shams' departure, Rumi never ceased to structure poems about Shams. He dedicated a whole diwan about him, he continued approaching people with differences, and he kept organizing dance ceremonies.

Nabila Akbar, along with her fellow lecturers from different Pakistani universities, have spotted additional situational ironies. The first one was that of Ella telling Scot that, as a married woman, she will never fall in love with a person other than her husband. Ironically, that was exactly what she did later on. Ella has totally denied the possibility of a presence of an individual as dear to her heart as Shams was to Rumi. After few short email talks, Ella could see herself drowning in the sea of love with Aziz whom she considered as a doppelganger of Shams after learning more about the two men, both through reading and chatting (2019).

Ella rejected the idea of her daughter marrying someone from a different background. She refused Jeannette's marriage with Scot for he was a Christian while her daughter came from a Jew family. Then, Ella fell in love with a Muslim, and left both of her house and family behind to live with him. In his turn, Aziz did not expect himself to be in love with Ella. In one of his emails to her, he even prayed, "may love find you when you least expect, where you least expect" (Shafak, 2010, p.55), having no intention to be the fulfilment and incarnation of this same prayer. Another irony that Akbar highlighted was that of Ella gathering her husband and children over one table each breakfast out of belief in the bond that such daily meetings create. Ironically, the distance that separated her from her husband was far cry longer than the space that a table occupied (Akbar, Asif & Nusrat, 2019).

3.4.7. *The Forty Rules of Love* and the Supernatural

Going on the same path that many writers took when fulfilling their postmodern narratives, Elif Shafak used pataphysical elements. The latter was inserted in the novel through foretelling, telepathy, supernatural and magic-like scenes. Initially, Shams foretells three things that turned out to be actual facts later on. First, he expected Desert Rose to quit prostitution. During his first meeting with the brothel's patron, Shams pointed out to Rose stating, "that girl is a good girl. One day soon she'll embark on a spiritual journey to find God. She'll abandon this place forever" (p. 111); and although it was odd and absurd to the patron, this expectation turned to be true. Then, during her pregnancy, Shams expected Kerra's baby to be a girl (p. 299), which was true based on historical sources. Also, Shams foretold Rumi that he was going to embark on a poetical journey which will end up crowning him as one of its best makers. Later on, Shams' prediction has been realized, and Rumi becomes one of the most famous poets, then and now.

Furthermore, foretelling has been incarnated through visions, or dreams, by both Rumi and Shams. Reiteratively, Rumi used to see Shams burning his fingers as candles igniting the former's path. This was a presage about the suffering that Shams would endure, or perhaps his death, for the sake of Rumi's 'enlightenment'. In his turn, Shams also saw that he was going to die. According to him, what he saw was not a simple dream. Rather, it was a vision. This is what Shams said when the innkeeper told him he must have been seeing a nightmare that he unconsciously cried, "I have neither fallen asleep nor had a bad dream […] I had a vision" (ibid, 29). In fact, Shams has told this to Baba Zaman as well, and when the master of the Sufi lodge did not show belief to what he said, the wondering dervish elaborated that visioning was a gift that has been acquired to him as part of a deal that he made with God, and that he also "saw angels and watched the mysteries of the universe unfold before [his] eyes" (p. 57).

Throughout this vision, Shams predicted the exact details that would occur the day of his assassination.

Telepathy was also present in the narrative. First, when Ella was trying to convince her daughter to have a second thought about her marriage plan with Scot, she said that "Love is only a sweet feeling bound to come and quickly go away" (p. 10). When the forty years woman opened Aziz's "Sweet Blasphemy", her eyes fell upon a statement which says "Love is not only a sweet feeling bound to come and quickly go away" (p. 15). How come this man wrote the same words she used, with the help of a small negation term, to deliver the opposite belief ? She never knew. All that could be understood is that somewhere between the two, there existed some waves which carried the echoes of Ella's life and thoughts to the mental harbour of Aziz.

In fact, the whole happenings in "Sweet Blasphemy", the transformation of Rumi and the strong bond between him and Shams, they were all reflections of what Ella was undergoing. In this vein, Rasha Dayekh, a Lebanese researcher at Beirut Arab University, says that "Aziz's "Sweet Blasphemy" establishes a mental dialectical exchange between him and Ella, telepathy, […] and she senses that this writer has her in mind as a reader" (qtd in Dayekh, 2016, p.1721). In the same column, Dayekh puts "Rumi's recurrent dream of Shams' burning his own fingers in order to enlighten the former's dark path" (ibid, p. 1720). In case it was the interpretation of Shams' death, or of the hate, rejection, and badmouthing he was yet to receive for Rumi to keep safe on his journey of transformation, this dream can also be as an extra-ordinary prediction of an inevitable future and fate that both men would experience in later stages from their lives (ibid).

The paranormal and the supernatural also had room in Elif's novel. Kimya, the way Shafak portrayed her, had the supernatural ability of observing and communicating with ghosts. First, she claimed she could see her "dead siblings" (p.169), then she saw 'Gevher',

Rumi's dead wife, the mother of his elder sons. Actually, it was this supernatural gift which qualified Kimya to be accepted as a student of Rumi.

Shams, again, had the ability to know about people only by reading their palms. As an exchange food and shelter, Shams read the innkeeper's hand in return. Just by observing it, he could know about the death of the innkeeper's wife. Shams also knew that she was pregnant, and that the man has always been living in agony for he thought that Genghis Khan and his soldiers burned the house when she, and the baby in her belly, were inside. Shams, moreover, informed the innkeeper about his capability to know that he always felt upset that the funeral of his wife and baby was not as 'proper' as it should have been. Eventually, however, the dervish comforted the man when he informed him that his wife died painlessly and immediately when "a wooden plank in the ceiling … collapsed on her head" (p. 32). Furthermore, he could even see her state after her death as he continued telling him that his "wife and son are both fine, traveling in infinity, as free as a speck of light" (p. 33). How could Shams know all of this? No body knows! Even when the innkeeper inquired, Shams left his inquiry unanswered. The only possible explanation to all of that is that the Sufi Dervish must have supernatural powers enabling him to do such magical thing. Such thing could also be confirmed when Shams talked to the dead Saints of Konya once he entered the town, claiming that they heard and responded to him.

For papers to remain dry inside water there should be magic. Shams threw books that Rumi owned and cherished into water; however, they remained as dry as they used to be when they were on their shelves, something that cannot not be considered magical. Nabila Akbar included this with the set of paranormal things in the novel. Also, she considered magical, the scene in which Shams turned a lifeless rose into lively one. Each time he watered the flower with a glass of wine, its colour changed (2019).

Actually, Shams received recurrent accusation of practicing black magic. He could know that the novice listened to his conversation with Baba Zaman, he could predict that the letter that Baba Zaman received had links with him, and he could calm down the raging horse of Rumi. Shams could also read through Aladdin's eyes his intention to beat him; and when the young man wanted to do that, he felt unable to move and deduced that it must be an act of sorcery that paused him. In this vein, Aladdin said, "a creepy feeling got hold of me, spreading from my hands to my feet, as if I were being pricked by a thousand needles, and my knees felt wobbly, unwilling to carry me. It must have been black magic. I had no doubt that Shams excelled in the darkest forms of sorcery" (p. 275).

3.4.8. Feminism under the Spot

Feminism-related notions have also been ingrained in *The Forty Rules of Love* (Akbar, Nasif & Nusrat, 2019). In this vein, Anisha Rajan stated that the feminine element in Elif's work was presented as "gendered 'other[s]' who are silenced by patriarchy" (qtd in ibid, p. 1155). In fact, addressing women's issues in a postmodern novel written by a postmodern feminist woman writer is nothing new. However, taking into consideration Shafak's background being a Turkish woman who had her traditional grandmother as a participant in raising her along with her mother (Shafak, 2010), makes of it a leap bringing out a work shouting for feminist notions. In fact, Shafak stands as a prominent feminist voice worldwide (Noreen, 2023). Throughout her novel, different-level-injustices were delineated via women from different backgrounds. Like a good number of Muslim feminists, Elif also worked on the presentation of "counter narratives" (Shah, 2016, p. 284) where she endeavoured to tear apart old ties coining Islam to anti-feminism. The writer managed to do that by the presentation of women being prevented from fulfilling their choices in converting to Islam, on the one hand (ibid); and through female characters who were banned from being involved in the educational system for reasons other than religion, on the other hand.

Serving an initiative for voicing conventional issues that all women -East and West- suffer from, Elif first used a woman character from a background that is different from that of her and the Oriental women in her circle, to deliver the message that women of all colours and all backgrounds equally share suffering from anti-feminism and patriarchy. Ella, the American Jew, led a traditional and dull life of a jobless housewife whose husband is a philanderer, although she lived in a nation known for freedom. Throughout her, the novel threw light on that women range who are still imprisoned in the conventional box that even Western societies, although they claim reaching a certain level of gender equality, are still constituting for women.

Ella knew about her husband's betrayals but never talked about them until the moment he informed her that he knew about her affair. Silence and suppression concerning her husband's affairs were not out of fear of confrontation with him. Rather, it was out of fear from confronting a society in which she would inevitably have to endure shame and condemnation even though she was the one being cheated on. This idea has been downrightly expressed throughout the following words:

> She [(Ella)] had never confronted him [(David)] openly about his affairs, not even hinting of her suspicions. The fact that none of their close friends knew anything made it easier for her to feign ignorance. There were no scandals, no embarrassing coincidences, nothing to set tongues wagging (Shafak, 2010, p. 63).

If there is one message that these expressions delivered, it would be that society is very harsh on women that not only they pay for their own faults, but they also are likely to pay for their male counterparts' wrong deeds as well. For a betrayal committed by a woman, all fingers of condemnation would be pointed out to the betrayer. For a betrayal coming from a man, however, women would also be blamed. If not blamed, they would at least lose social prestige for failing at 'keeping' a husband's heart around.

The same scene of David telling Ella that he would forgive her betrayal, forgetting about his own affairs, presents another instance of social patriarchy where betrayal, when the doer is a man, is being normalized. On the opposite side, it is intolerable and unforgivable when a woman betrays. In fact, betrayal is wrong and ugly from both sides, and it cannot be justified under any circumstance. However, the focus here is upon the pressure that society practices over women, regarding this. Additionally, what makes the situation even worse, is that men are aware of this, and that is why their social fears about betrayal is believed to be very less in comparison with their female counterparts.

In the regard of the aforementioned, Rajan held that Ella's affair with Aziz is nothing but a "response of a suppressed individuality towards society. Her twenty years of family life with her unfaithful husband, who had been into petty affairs with other women, had already started to build a volcano within her ready to erupt anytime" (2015, p. 56). Rajan also affirms that it is the "patriarchal society [which] buil[t] the tension within her [i.e. Ella] that culminates finally in the end of the old relationships for her" (ibid).

The same Indian scholar reckoned that the novel changed place for Ella. After taking her out of the column of the 'ideal', it carried her to the column of the 'real' (2015). The way Ella used to live a life devoted to family and housing made of her an 'ideal woman' in society. However, such idealism did not serve her emotional needs that she abandoned that 'social status' once she found the one who could fill her inner void. After such step that she took, Ella could finally meet her 'real self'. Nevertheless, the cost was her 'idealism'. Ella, thus, was not anymore 'ideal'. Even her status as a mother broke down as she was rejected by her own children, Avy and Orly.

Accusing women for mistakes that their husbands made was not restricted in the circle of betrayal. Even when a husband does something which is religiously disputable, wives can also receive accusations, this is what *The Forty Rules of love* unfolds through one of the

passages that have been released through Sheikh Yassin's tongue. When people heard that Rumi went to a tavern, one of them headed towards Sheikh Yassin and engaged into a discussion with him upon the punishment that Rumi should have after what he did, inquiring about the reason that led him to do that. As a response, Sheikh Yassin said that it might all be his marriage to a former Christian which led Rumi to strip away from religion. Word-for-word, he stated, "The man has a Christian wife, for starters. I don't care if she has converted to Islam. It is in her blood and in the blood of her child" (Shafak, 2010, p. 253). Even though Kerra converted to Islam long before that scene, although she had no hand in it, caused no damage to anybody, that she married Rumi a long time before he started doing the unconventional deeds that Shams asked him to do, and that she -herself- was against what he was doing since Shams' arrival, fingers still pointed out to her for her husband's 'change'.

Actually, apart from Kerra and Ella's stories, other feminist notions were delivered through patriarchal instances, not to encourage patriarchy but to unveil the damage that it can cause to women, everywhere and at any period in time. Through the story of Desert Rose in the embedded narrative layer, it could be grasped, once more, that faulty men and faulty women are not of equal weights when put over the two pans of the same social scale. Women's sins are way heavier than men's. For Baybars, it was acceptable for a man who goes to brothels to attend religious ceremonies at the mosque. Not only this, the same man qualified himself to judge a woman for being unqualified to do the same thing, just because of a past that she did not manage to get out from because of people like Baybars. The woman has been kicked out from the same mosque inside of which there were drunkards, rapists, fanatics and killers as well. Furthermore, the harlot's story also stands as a sample of counter narratives where a non-Muslim woman was prevented from devotion and being involved in Islam.

Elif's work teaches also that although they could be more intelligent, girls might have not been allowed to access the world of education during the thirteenth century, Orient. When the hermit proposed to take Kimya to Rumi for her intelligence not to go in vein, a harsh refusal came out from her mother who inquired, "What would a girl need an education for […] ? She should stay by my side and weave carpets until she gets married [...] a girl doesn't need books. She needs to learn housework and child care" (Shafak, 2010, p. 170). When her mother's opposition was pushed aside once her father agreed to take her to Rumi, Kimya faced the same inquiries from the one who was supposed to be her teacher, the most qualified and respected one in the region. Such scene was inserted -likely- to inform readers that no matter how educated people were, in front of social standards everyone bowed. Rumi went further by justifying his initial refusal to the young girl's request. He said, "But you are a girl. Even if we study intensely and make good progress, you'll soon get married and have children. Years of education will be of no use" (ibid, p. 171). Marriage, therefore, was understood as an institution meant to take girls from the 'dreamy' world of education and ambitions to a world where none of these should exist or be used.

Finally, when she was accepted, Kimya entered the school in which Rumi was giving his lectures. To her surprise, no girl existed in that school. Describing this, she said, "I walked toward the yard, where I saw several boys but no girls" (p. 171). Such sentence was used by Elif so as to stress the situation of girls being prevented from schooling at that time. However, Kimya could make it to Rumi's school, and so would any girl embracing a dream for knowledge and education, Elif hinted.

3.4.9. Between Ideological Deconstruction and Religious Relativism: Love as a Shelter

Between impiousness, a state of atheism, and piousness, *The Forty Rules of Love* tackled the sensitive topic of religion in two centuries which, although eight hundreds of years away from each other, they share close resemblance. The novel touched upon the clashes as

well as the opposite streams which arose in the two aforementioned eras, East and West. While religiosity in the novel was constructed to pay homage to the Sufi philosophy and aesthetics, irreligiosity was a result of times of chaos and turmoil. Nevertheless, both streams served the postmodern eradication of conventional mono-ideological discourses in postmodern writing. Such idea is, according to a number of researchers, a sort of 'religious relativism'.

Religious relativism is "a concept which advocates that there is no such thing like 'absolute truth' " (Akbar, Asif & Nusrat, 2019, p. 1162). Using different terms, postmodernism embraced subjective interpretations of truth, including the religious and spiritual types of it. Advocates of this view were firm protesters against the objectivity and universality of truth (Purohit, 2014). Consequently, ideologies were dismantled in postmodern writing, writers mingled adversary religious and spiritual leanings, and Shafak was no exception.

Irreligiosity was represented in the novel throughout two main characters, Ella and Desert Rose at their first versions. Aziz, as well, was an atheist before converting to Sufism (Shafak, 2010, p. 159). On the opposite side, some characters expressed a high sense of religiosity. In this section, two parties could be found; that of Sufis (Shams), and that of non-Sufi zealots (Sheikh Yassin). Other characters, however, incarnated religious hypocrisy (Akbar et al., 2020). Baybars stands as a striking sample in this category.

In her response to Aziz's email in which he shared he has prayed for her rupture with her daughter to be stitched, Ella expressed a will for praying back to the Dutch author. However, she soon elaborated that she was not religiously qualified to do that; this way she assumed that her prayers are likely not to be answered as a result of emptying herself from religious drives, a long time ago, to the extent of developing a sense of disbelief in God. Literally, Ella said: "I, too, would have prayed for you, but it has been such a long time since I

last knocked on God's door that I'm not sure if He still lives in the same place" (Shafak, 2010, p.79). Even when Jeannette forgave her mother, Ella gave credits to the tree -to which the Sufi writer tied the prayer he made to her- for answering the wish.

That way, Ella has indirectly confessed her atheistic inclinations. Through the narrator's voice, it has been mentioned that Ella was not born atheist. Rather she was a Jew, and this detail flew to the surface amidst her quarrel with Jeannette the day she refused to accept her marital plan with a Christian. Posteriorly, she claimed to have tried to learn about, and be involved into, different religious sects and activities, like Buddhism and Taoism. Nevertheless, she could not be committed to any, as she always felt that "as inviting as the mystic teachings were […] they were too compliant and inapplicable to modern life (p. 145). Besides that, Ella have always had negative feelings for people showing a certain commitment to religions. The narrator mentioned that "religious people got on her nerves" (p.159), that -to her- they were "bad and unbearable" (ibid), especially those who claim to be part of the religion of Islam. Moreover, Ella believed that if there could be one thing taking today's world to its graveyard, it would be religion.

In a similar manner to that of Ella, in the embedded story, Desert Rose has also expressed a drift from religion. The nature of her 'work' as a whore in a brothel was believed to be the reason which both enlarged and deepened the empty hole between her and 'God'. Deep down, however, the harlot did never want such hole to exist, for it was only something that the course of events in her life dictated in a period when she could do nothing but surrendering, she thought. Back during her infancy, Desert Rose has always felt that "God was [her] friend" (p.118). At a certain moment in the brothel, she felt an urgent need for having this friendship restored. The young woman expressed a will for returning to the 'right' path. However, such return to 'God' was not an easy task in an environment which can do anything except forgiving a woman with 'a past'. Once the beautiful maiden threw a first step

into that path, she stubbed with a massive social rejection. When people discovered that she was part of the attendees of Rumi's sermon, she was attacked and insulted by a bundle of non-Sufi zealots.

The woman in search for a gate across which she would be able to access the garden of faith has actually expected such social reaction. However, she could not cease herself from wondering why the same people who "hate seeing women prostitutes […] make life hard for a prostitute who wants to repent and start life anew?" (p.116). Such questions and mistreatment, however, did not stop Rose from making an oath to leave the brothel, whenever the opportunity would allow, especially after her conversation with Shams of Tabriz. The latter reminded her of a veridic story of a prostitute whose "sins had been pardoned" (p.134) for she gave water to a thirsty dog. Also, Shams elaborated by presenting what it was like to be too impure to be in God's houses. He told Rose that he trusted she was pure, and that one day she would set herself free from the brothel, for to Shams, "real filth is the one inside. The rest simply washes off. There is only one type of dirt that cannot be cleansed with pure waters, and that is the stain of hatred and bigotry contaminating the soul" (p.111). To Shams, purifying the body is easier than purifying a soul. A body can be purified "through abstinence and fasting" (ibid). However, hearts cannot be purified until they open up to love (ibid).

In fact, people like those who mistreated Desert Rose were usually non-Sufi fanatics, extremists or religiously hypocrites. An epitome in this category was Baybars, a man with a beard, whose appearance bear witness to a religious commitment while his deeds did not. Baybars reprobated the attendance of a whore in a mosque. Meanwhile, it was fine and decent for him, a man who frequently visited brothels, to be there. Not only this, but to judge other people -belonging to the same class as Desert Rose- for being unqualified to enter holy places.

Elif's work also included pious characters and good men of religion who represented religion positively. Jalal-Din-Rumi, a main protagonist in the embedded narrative, was one in

this class. In and out, the mystic was known for purity and goodness. Later on in the story, after meeting Shams, much of his religious performance changed. Such change, however, was not appreciated by his followers and disciples as it led him to behave in a demeaning way, according to them.

Besides Atheism, Judaism, and Islam, Elif shed light on Sufism being a spiritual place where everyone could meet, for to her Sufi characters, Sufi mysticism was the "religion of love" (p. 311). This religion was based on the forty maxims that Shams laid, and it was derived from overall journeys of the mystics of Islam. With such religious cocktail, Elif expressed a religious relativism by presenting Sufism in her own way as a faith rooting in Islam, the way she saw it.

Aziz in the frame narrative, and Shams in the embedded story were the characters embracing that. Aziz was portrayed as "a spiritual man who took matters of religion and faith seriously, stayed away from all contemporary politics, and did not "hate" anything or anyone". The seriousness that Aziz meant, there, had no relation with fundamental and orthodox application of religion. Rather, Aziz was only referring to looking at the kernel spiritualities of religions with earnestness and devotion while caring less about peripherical organized practices. Likewise, on the parallel layer, Shams was a Sufi. His mystical philosophy, however, was unconventional with the setting he was living in, the thing that involved him into quarrels with non-Sufis. Shams' spirituality aimed at a total purification from statuses, peripheries, and social sophistications and limitations. To him, that was the kernel, or heart, of religiosity; to be a free lover of God, without taking into consideration the constraints that society sowed into religious gardens.

Ella and Aziz were from different religious backgrounds; and yet both were good hearted, and both met in the garden of love. Likewise, Rumi and Kerra were a happily married couple although the latter was Christian before conversion to Islam. Elif, through her

characters, introduces the notion of love for being the only bond able to conjoin people happily without regard to their religious differences. To her, love is universal; it is a backyard garden that should exist inside religious shelters for fanaticism to break away.

Love widens perspectives and allows seeing the good in the 'bads'. A prostitute like Desert Rose, or Drunkards like Suleiman were presented as good characters, because the narrator looked at their life stories with the eye of compassion and love. This was to emphasize the idea that everyone has the right to be on God's side. People should not stand on the way of anyone heading towards God, using the excuse of social unworthiness as a justification for such prevention, and no one should be considered as inferior than to be good and moral.

Among the different characters of *The Forty Rules of Love*, it was Shams who adopted such views. The day of Rumi's ceremony, it was only him who firmly stood in front of those who wanted to punish Rose for entering the mosque. Doing so, Hanaa Berrezoug -an Algerian scholar-, reckons that it was only him who truly adhered to the Qur'anic verse which says:

" ادع إلى سبيل ربك بالحكمة و الموعظة الحسنة و جادلهم بالتي هي أحسن إن ربك هو أعلم بمن ضل عن سبيله و هو أعلم بالمهتدين "

"Invite (people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel. And argue with them in the best of manners. Surely, your Lord Knows best the one who deviates from His way, and He knows best the ones who are on the right path"

(*The Qur'an*, 16: 125 - qtd in Berrezoug 2023, p. 735).

The conception of the relativity of 'goodness' and 'badness' is in fact believed to be Elif's way to say that everything is relative and open to interpretations. By the same token, people's extent of religiosity stands disputable in the novel. According to some characters, a religious person, is the one who is convenient with the physical and ethical systems that society dictates. Sheikh Yassin and Baybars were examples in this category. To other characters, however, religion can only be found in the hearts of people, and it has no physical

standards apart from coexisting and interacting with others by means of love. According to those people, goodness is only bound to the purity of hearts, and "real filth is the one inside" (Shafak, 2010, p. 111).

Thus, because people do not have the ability to delve into each other's hearts and intentions, religiosity stands unweighable yet questionable and sceptical. It is right upon this ground that Shafak is believed to have followed the steps of Soren Kierkegaard, a Danish philosopher, in holding that "Religious faith is always in an intimate relation with doubt and faith. For Kierkegaard, doubt does not refer to diminishment of faith but it is integral to faith and an enhancement of its powers" (qtd in Hafeez & Abbas, 2022, p. 92).

Elif, through characters like Shams and Aziz, shared her belief that ideologies are not meant to be the private possession of "stakeholders of religion who blindly believe in their own superiority and portray religion as rigid and conservative" (Akbar, Asif & Nusrat, 2019, p. 1162). In the regard of what have been mentioned, one of the forty rules that the embedded narrative unfolded said:

> Each and every one of us is a walking Qur'an. The quest for God is ingrained in the hearts of all, be it a prostitute or a saint. Love exists within each of us from the moment we are born and waits to be discovered from then on … Therefore, do not look for Sheitan outside yourself either. The devil is not an extraordinary force that attacks from without. It is an ordinary voice within (Shafak, 2010, p. 112).

Finding meaning for one's own life is bound to finding love. For the latter to be discovered, however, a change must occur. In its turn, for change to occur, characters should quit their conventional lifestyle and take a leap of faith. For this, answers to one's existential questions must be chased, and choices must be made accordingly, even if chosen options were risky and unreliable to others.

3.4.10. Leap of Faith and The Quest for Meaning in *The Forty Rules of Love*

The Forty Rules of Love coins finding meaning to one's own life with happiness. Characters in both layers did not embrace satisfaction and happiness until they truly found the cores of their lives by moving closer to God and daring to make life-shifting choices. On their way they faced hurdles. Their journeys were full of challenges and hardships. Fear and dread were there, however, the day they started making real change and firm decisions about life-shifting issues, they could get to the shores of essence and they finally attained the feeling of happiness and peace.

Ella chose to care less about what Kierkegaard labelled "ethical modes of existence" (Hafeez & Abbas, 2022, p. 101) by making a decision that was incoherent with social rules. In the eyes of society, Ella was not an appropriate wife and mother. Finding her life purpose was at the cost of her social respect, however, she managed to grasp satisfaction and happiness by comprehending the meaning of her life. Likewise, Rumi lost his social prestige in the quest of his essence, and although the one who helped him to take a leap of faith was assassinated, Jalal sticked to the version he became after taking such leap. Last but not least, Desert Rose has also taken a leap of faith when she quit the brothel for spiritual devotion and social integration. Doing so, she had to endure harsh rejection and treatment, inside and out of the brothel. By the end, she could find the peace she was looking for once she made her mind and resisted the initial reactions to her choice.

Like Kierkegaard, Elif thinks that those pay so much heed to society and its ethical modes of existence when making decisions are by no means able to change their lives. When the novice offered to accompany Shams in his mission, his request was rejected. This is due to the inability of the young dervish to take a leap of faith, and his over-care about others' opinions, Shams believed. Shams did actually test the novice, but the result only confirmed his pre-estimation. Describing him, Shams said, "you are too timid for me. You care too much

about what other people think. But you know what? Because you are so desperate to win the approval of others, you'll never get rid of their criticisms, no matter how hard you try" (Shafak, 2010, p. 89). Such statement goes hand in hand with Kierkegaard's thinking stream regarding faith, decision making and change.

3.4.11. Intertextuality and Embedding

Intertextuality was an additional postmodern tool that Shafak used to emphasise her firm belief in universality. Books, Quranic verses, and even songs were inserted in her novel, serving as wires linking the work to different cultures, and thus, to different readers as well. *The Forty Rules of Love* pointed out to literary works, of fictional and philosophical natures, like the story of "Sleeping Beauty" and Averroës' *The Incoherence of the Incoherence.* In this respect, Rasha Dayekh has tackled two other examples which she considered as cases of intertextuality alluding to works of literature First, the killer's feeling of guilt which he likened to a necklace throttling his neck shared resemblance with Samuel Taylor Coleridge's verses in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", in which the mariner suffered from a feeling of guilt which gave him the vibe of the existence of the albatross he killed around his neck, haunting him (2016). Dayekh's second intertextual instance of a literary nature was when Suleiman the Drunk quoted Khayyam's verses,

> *"Did God set grapes a-growing, do you think,*
> *And at the same time make it a sin to drink?"*
> (qtd in Shafak, 2010, p. 128)

Aladdin has also felt guilty for killing Shams. Expressing his guilt, the narrative pointed out to the story of Cain and Abel (Dayekh, 2016). Intertextuality in this case drew threads with religious-based references. In fact, such type of connection was not found between Elif's work and the story of Cain and Abel only. In his turn, Shams has also quoted the words of

God in Surat Al-Hijr, from *The Quran,* when he said, in the name of God, "I breathed into him of My Spirit" (*The Qur'an*, 15:29, qtd in Shafak, 2010, p. 181).

Nevertheless, the novel's most recurrent quotes were Rumi's sayings and poems. When her husband promised to shower her with care and love so that she will not need to look for emotions elsewhere, Ella quoted Rumi when he said, "we don't need to hunt for love outside ourselves. All we need to do is to eliminate the barriers inside that keep us away from love" (Shafak, 2010, p. 250).

Even more, Shafak's narrative layers per se were connected through Aziz's narrative, and therefore, a relationship of intertextuality joined them. Throughout the closing lines of the novel, Ella from the frame layer quoted one of the fictional rules that Elif laid through Shams in the nested story. Although the rule has not been introduced by Shams in the embedded story, but it was to him that it was coined. In fact, it was the fortieth rule that Ella chose to quote, and it was throughout it that the story came to an end.

Beside all of the previously mentioned instances of intertextuality, songs have also been pointed out to in Shafak's seminal work." In one of Ella's emails to Aziz, Doris Day's song "Que Será, Será (p. 144) was alluded to.

3.4.12. Historiographic Metafictional Traces

Based on Linda Hutcheon's definition of the postmodern term, which has been already stated in the second chapter of this research, and although she argued that her work is a mere fiction (Shafak, 2010), Shafak's magnum opus is definitely an example of historiographic metafiction. In other words, *The Forty Rules of Love* is made up of two narratives in which a character from the frame story reads the second narrative. Based on this, the fictionality of the embedded story is being pointed out to by being the literary product which includes the personal reflections of Aziz, a fictional character, upon the life stories of Rumi and his circle.

This makes of it a case of self-reflexivity. Taking into consideration that the previously mentioned protagonists of the nested narrative are actually historical figures, 'historical' would be one of the classifications of the work. Combining self-reflexivity and fictionalized historiography in one work is what Hutcheon labels historiographic metafiction (Bulter, 2011).

In fact, Shafak stated that "names, characters, places and incidents [in her work] are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or to actual events or locales is entirely coincidental" (Shafak, 2010, p. n.d.). This might be the reason why Elif has chosen to insert historical references in the embedded story as a creation of the fictional character in the frame story. This might also be the reason why readers could only access the embedded narrative through the embedding's protagonist 'Ella', so as to assert its fictionality. However, it is noteworthy that the embedded story moved on even after Ella finished reading the novel. Readers, by then, are left alone to decipher the remaining secrets of the story. According to Rasha Dayekh, it is at this level, that "the line which separates fact from fiction is blurred, and the sub-novel breaks free from its meta-fictional status" (2016, p. 1720). Taking this into account, Elif is believed to have used such statement only to avoid historical criticism, or to freely speak about incidents and characters from history, the way she considers and sees them, without a straightforward statement of her personal points of view which might put her on trial, the way her novel *The Bastard of Istanbul* did.

Elif might have inserted fictional additions, to the figures whose lives have been tackled, out of will to stuff the empty spaces that were left unapproached in their official biographies. In this vein, Zirrar says that when she wrote about real historical figures for instance, "Shafak took many of the orientalist readings [...] and filled the holes with her own imagination, often with grotesque and disturbing concepts" (2021, para. 13).

The historical notes that the book spoke about were, at times, events that took place in history and were recorded and commented upon by characters of the nested story for different purposes. Sometimes, the chaos and wars during such events caused the fate of characters like that of Desert Rose to change. Sometimes, it is the personality of characters which was influenced; the case of Baybars. At other times, historical events were laid and recorded in marginal talks between characters only to carry the writer's personal perspectives (Belalia, 2018), as well as her interpretations upon specific facts from history, something that Martinec pointed out to and coined to postmodern writing (2021).

Desert Rose became harlot as a result of historical issues. The harlot was born as a Christian in Nicaea, in a time of turmoil. The village she was living in was attacked twice, once by the crusaders and then by the Seljuk army. Back then, when she was young, she lived happily with her family. Then, after her brother's criminal act, she wanted to flee to Constantinople. But because it was a time of unrest, she was robbed on her way to her aunt there. She was raped but could escape the forest in which she was imprisoned, heading towards the same old destination, i.e. Constantinople. When she stepped over it, aware that she will not be received by her aunt as she became a girl with 'no honour', she travelled again with gypsies and soldiers. In her voyage, she met Jackal head who assumed she met the requirement of brothels in Konya, and that was the way she entered the world of prostitution. Therefore, in a way or another, historical matters like invasions and wartimes -which leave an atmosphere of unrest and unsettlement- do have an impact over the lives of people, and the harlot was no exception.

Likewise, as much as the impacts of the wartime shifted the directions of the harlot's life, as much as it left impacts over the personalities of those who took part on battlefields, like Baybars. Paranoia, harshness and violence are among the features that are suggested to be traces of war in Baybars' personality. His mood swings, along with his words when he was

raving with the atrocities that Crusaders and Mongols committed, even when he was in a brothel talking to a harlot, prove those suggestions to be relevant. Verbatim, Baybars stated:

> … There were rumours of the Crusaders coming back. We heard terrible stories about the atrocities they committed in Constantinople, ransacking the mansions, demolishing the icons inside chapels and churches. Next, we heard about Seljuk attacks. And before the tales of terror of the Seljuk army faded, those of the ruthless Mongols started. The name and the face of the enemy changed, but the fear of being destroyed by outsiders remained as steady as snow on Mount Ida (Shafak, 2010, p. 118).

The last statement that Baybars uttered stands as a potent argument supporting the idea that a war has long term damages over the psyches' compositions of people, especially those who took part in it.

In fact, Shafak has spoken a lot about Mongols, Crusaders, and Genghis Khan, throughout characters of her narrative. Besides Baybars and the Harlot, Baybars' uncle also described the atrocities that they committed over the lands they invaded. In this vein, the zealot said:

> hundred Mongol diplomats sent out by Genghis Khan to negotiate for peace were all slaughtered. After that, Genghis Khan turned into a fireball of fury, declaring war against Islam. How and why the diplomats were killed, nobody could say. Some people suspected that it was Genghis Khan himself who had his own diplomats killed, so that he could start this massive war campaign in the first place. It could be true. One never knows. But I do know that in five years the Mongols devastated the whole Khorasan area, causing destruction and death everywhere they galloped. And two years ago they defeated the Seljuk forces at Kosedag, turning the sultan into a tribute-paying vassal. The only reason the Mongols didn't wipe us out is that it is more profitable for them to keep us under their yoke (p. 187-188).

The Forty Rules of Love also revealed some of the warfare weapons that have been used by the Mongol army. In one of Baybars' parts in the narrative, the warrior said that the Mongol used a:

> vast array of weapons, each designed for a specific purpose. Every Mongol soldier is heavily armored, with a mace, an ax, a saber, and a spear. On top of that, they have arrows that can penetrate armor, set whole villages ablaze, poison their victims, or pierce the hardest bones in the human body. They even have whistling arrows, which they use to send signals from one battalion to another (p. 188).

Furthermore, the final lines of the embedded narrative have also spoken about the fall of Baghdad, death of Saladin, and about Mamelukes and their victory over the Mongols. In this vein, shafak's Rumi said that it was "in 1258, that Baghdad fell to the Mongols. [...] That same year Saladin died ... In 1260, it was the Mongols' turn to lose. The Mamelukes of Egypt defeated them" (p. 343). Such statements of the fall of Baghdad which was believed to be the centre of the world, the death of someone whose heroism was known far and wide, the defeat of Mongols who were recognized for being invincible, were -according to Rumi- historical truths serving as reminders for humans to remember that no matter how "Every winner is inclined to think he will be triumphant forever and [how] every loser tends to fear that he is going to be beaten forever" (ibid), eternal truth condemn both sides for being erroneous, and that is "for the same reason [that] everything changes except the face of God" (ibid).

On another front, other historical notes came in religious and spiritual robes. Their purposes were merely delivering rules and teaching 'morales'. Religious historical references that have been mentioned in *The Forty Rules of Love* were numerous. First, the famous Quranic story of the prophet Moses, peace be upon him, and the wise Khidr from *surat* 'Al-Kahf', "the lifelong traveller" (p. 209) and "the Comforter of the Distressed and Dejected" (ibid), have been pointed out to. In the novel, the story was part of Sultan Walad's reflection about that urge that people have about talking about things that they "known so little about" (ibid), like the nature of the bond between Rumi and Shams. Therefore, such religious tale teaches and spreads a morale that reminds people to keep away from pre-judgements because human knowledge and comprehension are very limited than to understand everything. "Things that can seem malicious or unfortunate are often a blessing in disguise, whereas

things that might seem pleasant can be harmful in the long run" (p. 210). At the same time, the story assures the existence of strong companionships' stories among prophets as well, which makes people shattering about Shams and Rumi senseless, Sultan Walad's thoughts murmured (ibid).

A religion-related historical reference that took place in Shafak's embedded narrative was the village of Sodom and Gomorrah, to which the prophet Lut was sent, and their punishment because of their lust and violence (Akbar, Asif & Nusrat, 2019). Those villages were mentioned throughout the zealot's tongue (Baybars' uncle). They were pointed out to in the occasion of speaking about "people who are Muslims in name only" (p. 150), because of whom God sent Mongols and Crusaders to Konya as a punishment after the wrong deeds and sins that invaded the city. Such fake Muslims, Baybars' uncle reckons, are like Sufis, true "enemies of Islam" (ibid). In fact, Baybars' uncle considered Mongols and crusaders just like "an earthquake, a famine, or a flood" (ibid) that might have occurred as a divine damnation following the spread of evildoings. A corruption like this, according to him, only occurs "when people lose hold of the rope of God". As a consequence to that, he claims, such people "are bound to go astray" (ibid).

Other historical references of religious nature are plenty in the narrative. Mentioning the Day of Judgement where people will have to walk over a bridge called 'Sirat', the "rivalry between Shiites and Sunnis" (p. 188), Cain's killing of Abel, as well as the prophet's friend Ali's story of tolerance with the infidel and the way his leniency led the infidel to convert to Islam; these are all instances from history whose traces are found in religious sources.

History in Shafak's seminal work also served as bibliographical accounts telling the life stories of historical figures, like Rumi, his relatives, as well as his social circle including Shams of Tabriz. Son of Baha' al-Din, Rumi inherited education, mysticism, and also social prestige from his father. He was portrayed as a great scholar and preacher living in Konya,

having two sons from his former wife, respectively, Sultan Walad and Aladdin. Years after Gevher bid farewell to life, the well-known mystic married Kerra with whom he had a son and was expecting another baby that Shams, in Elif's version, predicted to be a girl. A small historical look at those details that Shafak's narrative entailed confirms all those data to be valid. Besides that, Shams' companionship with Rumi was both strong and critical as much as the novel tells. The sources that have been reviewed in the first chapter tell quite the same details that the narrative informs about, with the exception of Shams' death which -in reality- is still unknown and has multiple possibilities, only one of which was recounted in Elif's version.

3.5. Embedding and Polyvocal Policies in *The Forty Rules of Love*

Since its launching, *The Forty Rules of Love* caught attentions and light due to its special narratological structure. Through parallel layers, juxtaposed by the reading act that the frame's protagonist engaged in, two narratives were delineated. Although they took place in different settings, the two stories were unfolded forming a mirror-reflection case in which a person's journey of self-realization from the embedding layer reflects that of a past-time character from the embedded narrative. As per the nested layer, its narratological structure witnessed the utilization of a multi-faceted and poly-voiced depiction of events. Such polyvocality was also fulfilled via the presentation of a language diversified in terms of nature and type, the thing that Bakhtin called heteroglossia. Consequently, aiming to penetrate universalism through vocal and narratological plurality, the narrative scheme in Elif's seminal work was accused for nurturing intra-faith binarism where Sufism was given credits to fanaticize non-Sufi Islamic sects.

3.5.1. Embedding and Embedded: Mise-en-Abyme ?

Time in *The Forty Rules of Love* moved in spirals, leaving traces for stories to be woven onto two different orbits, all echoing individual odysseys propelling to self-discovery,

spiritual awakening and self-freedom. Using two layers, Shafak poured another postmodern touch by shaking off conventional narratological norms via the presentation of her work in the form of an envelope; once opened, the story inside unfolds.

Such weaving structure that Elif chose gave the narrative a mirror-reflection relationship (Dayekh, 2016). That is to say, the present and the past were portrayed as doppelgangers sharing copy-paste features while occupying different spaces; one of which is the actual and concrete, while the other is delusional. Using different words, past-time stories are actually non-existent and cannot be changed in the present. Nevertheless, their virtual presence is there, and it is of utmost importance due to the free life lessons they are capable of offering to present-time people. Rumi died on a date far distant from the present-time; and yet, his life story was still instrumental to reshape the life of Ella, a twenty-first century woman.

The idea of spatial relationship between the two layers of Shafak's narrative is actually traced back in Majed Aladylah's article upon the matter. According to Majed, the transformative journey that characters took in the novel was that of space. To Ella, the kitchen was portrayed as a place to which she refuged whenever life got hard on her. In fact, it was her comfort zone and the symbol of passivity and domestication in the narrative. Once she started changing, Ella left the kitchen, then the house, then the whole country. Stepping out of the kitchen, therefore, was a depart from what Aladylah called "negative" or "dreadful" place -where Ella was lost and broken- to an "open" one -where Ella acquainted herself and was emotionally liberated- (2019, p. 35).

Likewise, stepping out from *madrasa* and mosques to the outside world where he was found at different social institutions and places including a tavern and a Jewish ghetto, Rumi crossed the borders of what was portrayed as a religiously-enclosed world towards Shams' spiritual universe of Sufism which allowed him to get rid of "the moorings that tied [him] to

life as [he] knew it" (Shafak, 2010, p. 290). In a similar manner, Desert Rose's transformative journey delineated her path from the brothel to the world outside of it. In this context, Aladylah says that Elif "employs the outer space for transmitting the mental, spiritual, and inner space of two different centuries … moments from the past help her characters to be liberated, relieved, existed, and transformed spiritually through a spatial journey of religion of love" (2019, p. 36).

Although distant in terms of time and space, the twenty-first century looked like nothing but a mirror to the thirteenth in Elif's work; both are times of cultural unrest and religious turmoil. In this vein, *The Forty Rules of Love* reads, "In many ways the twenty-first century is not that different from the thirteenth century. Both will be recorded in history as times of unprecedented religious clashes, cultural misunderstandings, and a general sense of insecurity and fear of the Other" (Shafak, 2010, p. 15).

The religious and cultural clashes in the twenty-first century are, therefore, nothing but a reflection -and continuation- of the thirteenth century religious and cultural issues. In the contemporary narrative, religious and cultural issues were sketched through Ella's refusal of her daughter's marriage from Scott because of his different religious background. While her daughter belonged to a Jew family, Scott was a Christian, and this made of it an issue to both of Jeannette's parents, including her father who was known for 'open-mindedness'. In this respect, Ella compared marrying "someone from a different background" to a "big gamble" (ibid, p. 09).

In fact, the narrative unveils that mentioning the name of Scot was enough for the parents to surmise that the man was Christian, the same way Aziz's name was enough for Ella to stereotype him. Moreover, even when Jeannette asked about the reason why her marital plan stubbed with a primary harsh refusal from her parents, she expressed an inquiry whether things would have been different if she mentioned a name like "Aaron". The question there

was not solely religious, it was also cultural. Far from the religious reasons of refusal, Shafak pointed out to the value of names in the different cultures, the way names can tell about people's backgrounds, the way they can divide people into 'self' and 'other', and the way they can be enough to decide about the inclusion or the refusal of 'the other' in someone's life. Such cultural issue has been also addressed by Adel Siad, an Algerian writer and researcher, who stated that such scene showed the manner in which people "encapsulate cultural information in individual icons, then generalizing those icons upon the whole embracers of a given culture" (2021, p. 113). Siad also mentioned that such cultural thing was enough to serve the idea of fear from the other (2021).

Such issues that have been pointed out to in Elif's frame narrative were nothing new. They were only reflections of what was going on in the book's thirteenth century. The question of religion, and its ideological and cultural relation to names was also addressed in the embedded story. Kerra was Christian before converting to Islam when she became Rumi's wife, the thing that everyone around Rumi opposed and criticised out of fear that she might have negative influence over him. As a matter of fact, Kerra has always been perplexed about unveiling her desire to name the daughter that she was going to have 'Mary' after 'Mother Mary'; and again, that was out of fear from the other's reaction. The other to Kerra included all Muslims, including her husband. However, Shams explained to her that Mary should not be abandoned by Muslims as well; and being a symbol of "compassion, mercy, affection, and unconditional love" (Shafak, p. 299), Kerra would be welcomingly allowed to name her daughter after "Mother Mary". Such extract in the novel was an initiative to break the stereotypical depiction of the names-religion relationship.

An analogy that Elif introduced, through Shams, to break apart conventional cultural stereotypical depictions was by embedding the story of four nomads whose financial savings were very small that they decided to buy only one food that they would all agree upon. Taking

into account that the men were from different countries (Grece, Persia, Arabia, and Turkey), each said what he desired in his own mother tongue. *Staphalion, angoor*, *aneb*, and *üzüm* were respectively the names that the four men uttered. In fact, the four names stand for the same fruit. Nevertheless, because they were ignorant about each other's languages, the nomads kept fighting over what to buy. The story ends with the arrival of a Sufi who could understand them all, bought some grapes and pressed them, extracted a juice out of them, and gave some to each one of the men. Shams ended the story saying that to that Sufi, "what mattered was the essence of the fruit, not its outer form". In the same way, he proceeded, "Christians, Jews, and Muslims … quarrel about the outer form" (p. 299). Unlike them all, Sufis always care about "the essence" (ibid).

"When it comes to the basics, ordinary Christians and ordinary Muslims have more in common with each other than with their own scholars" (ibid, p. 178). Therefore, caring about the essence, and the negligence of labels and superficial differences is the only possible remedy to all the religious and cultural challenges in both of the twenty-first and thirteenth centuries in which stories of both layers occurred. In this vein, Rasha Dayekh, says that the narrative technique of embedding, along with the fusion of the two opposing corners of the world were:

> intentionally undertaken in order to exhibit a kind of resemblance among remote eras and spaces, and to show that, as always, the cure of traumatic conditions is one and only: it is to unlearn our stale and imposed selves molded of ignorance and prejudices, and to re-learn to live and love, by embracing our true humanistic essence (2016, p. 1719).

Change, love, and acceptance of the other are also keys to a global peace. Differences should be embraced, because the world has always been, and is always going to be liquid; in this context, Elif -through Kerra- gave the example of Anatolia. She both states and wonders,

Anatolia is made up of a mixture of religions, peoples, and cuisines. If we can eat the same food, sing the same sad songs, believe in the same superstitions, and dream the same dreams

at night, why shouldn't we be able to live together? I have known Christian babies with Muslim names and Muslim babies fed by Christian milk mothers. Ours is an ever-liquid world where everything flows and mixes (Shafak, 2010, p. 178).

Today's world is nothing different. The dissimilarities and issues that took place in the thirteenth century are also part of the twentieth century challenges. The outlet -in its turn- is the same; a radical change starting at individual bases. The transformative journey that one takes to become more fluid, emotionally mature and loving, per se, remains the same everywhere and for all times. This has been noted as another mirror-reflection experience that the two layers in Shafak's novel exhibited. Ella's transformative journey portrayed a reflection of that of Rumi, while Aziz formed a reflection to Shams. Both Ella and Rumi were living a conventional life which seemed perfect to everyone except themselves. On their quest for their true selves and their purposes in life, Ella and Rumi needed the presence of a catalyst to carry them out of their restricted cocoons. Therefore, the presence of both Aziz and Shams, respectively, was instrumental for transformation and mental and emotional growths. Names of catalysts and catalysed changed from one century to another, from one place to another, and from one layer to another; and yet, the experience remained unchangeable. "For every Shams of Tabriz who has passed away, there will emerge a new one in a different age, under a different name. Names change, they come and go, but the essence remains the same" (Shafak, 2010, p. 344).

Although it is made up of two main narratives, *The Forty Rules of Love* did not actually include only two layers. A third one was inserted from time to time throughout short stories that embedded characters shared. The already mentioned story of "The Four Nomads and the Sufi" that Shams narrated was one, besides the story of "Layla and Majnun", "The Four Merchants and the Muezzin", "The Cross-Eyed Assistant", and the religious stories of Moses, Cain and Abel, and "The Prostitute and the Dog", to name but a few, have all formed an

occasional third layer. Such stories from the distant past were inserted as emphases that the past has always been, and would forever be, instrumental in tutoring present-time people seeking for growth and comprehension of the purposes behind their existence.

Specifically, the story of Ella on one layer, compared to the story of Rumi in the embedded narrative could also be considered as a case of what is labelled as 'mise-en-abyme'. Ella's conservative life-shape has always left an empty space inside of her; a void that has not been filled until she fell in love with Aziz. The latter, helped the forty-years woman to see the world from a different angle, both through his letters, and through his version on the life of Rumi. Ella's transformation set her soul free and poured joy into her heart. Since such transformation does not go unpaid, Ella's change was at the cost of her marriage, social reputation, as well as her twins. Rumi, in his turn, was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He inherited education, fame, and mysticism from his father. However, he always felt a strange sadness and a void "growing deeper and wider with each passing day" (ibid, p. 178), a feeling that "gnaws at [his] soul like a disease and accompanies [him] wherever [he] go[es]" (ibid, p. 99). It was until Shams' arrival that Rumi's life has been ignited when he tasted the beauty of true companionship. Shams set several tests and different experiences to get Rumi out of his ordinary lifestyle, the thing that costed him his social prestige, and later on his companion. Such flow of events moving from steadiness to change in a similar way throughout both of the narrative layers made of the stories look like a painting and its small analogical photograph inside, something known as mise-en-abyme in the world of art, and also in world literature starting from the postmodern age.

3.5.2. Polyvocal Insertion by Elif

In her narrative, Elif employed multiple tools of polyvocality. First, she used dialogism to unveil the diversified mindsets directly out of characters' interactions. As a result, a linguistic diversity was spotted as well. Also, the Turkish writer used multi-faceted

exhibitions of a number of plot-points to provide readers with the full narratological images by showing them the different angles of a given scene. Such use of the two previously mentioned techniques -together for a specific scene, or separately- is considered makes of the novel a case of polyphonic-dialogism. In this section, the three techniques are going to be discussed in relation with the role they played in the narrative. For this, samples from the novel are going to be provided.

3.5.2.1. Dialogism

One of the polyvocal manifestations in Elif's seminal narrative was through dialogism. This narrative device was performed by means of direct speech exchange between characters of both embedded and embedding layers, and through the emailing process between Ella and Aziz.

Serving its main roles that Bakhtin identified in *Problems of Dostoevsky*, dialogism in *The Forty Rules of Love* supported the notion of individuality and multiplicity of truths. Throughout their first dialogic exchange over the dinner table, the Rubinsteins, although all were Jews, expressed opposing points of view regarding multi-cultural marriage in which a Jewish female would take part. While Jeannette, the concerned, expressed no fear from undertaking the step towards the fulfilment of such marriage, her father questioned the possibility of it to succeed, while her mother pre-condemned it to be a failure. In fact, Jews are stereotyped for being among the communities fancying enclosure upon themselves. However, the dialogic interaction between the members of the same Jewish family tore apart such stereotype by providing multiple views regarding the subject-matter, amongst which was a modern-generation element showing refusal to old-fashioned Jewish convictions regarding mixed-marriages.

In a similar way, Shams's interaction with Rumi and other characters unveiled different religious perspectives and attitudes regarding some acts. Throughout a dialogic exchange

outside the mosque inside of which Rumi was preaching, Baybars and his fellow zealots expressed shame towards the harlot who happened to be inside a mosque. However, Shams engaged in a talk with them throughout which he expressed that such thing should be no crime. Not only this, Shams also questioned the truthfulness of the zealots' faith that they paid attention to something other than Rumi's words at the first place. In fact, Shams' interaction with the other characters of the narrative created what Seblini labelled "intra-faith pluralism" (2021, p.02). That is to say, through Shams' words, the narrative could draw shape to the mystic's understanding of Sufism. Through Baybars and his uncle, on the other front, the text sketched another understanding of Islamic mysticism. Between that and this, two streams could be differentiated under the Islamic umbrella. Such religious binarism appears more plainly through 'polyphony' , another narrative technique that Elif employed in her work, and a device that is going to be discussed in one of the following sections.

E-mailing between Aziz and Ella can also be considered as a process of dialogism occurring at the level of the frame narrative. Via their first electronic message-response interaction, Ella and Aziz shared opposing views regarding 'love'. While Ella expressed a disbelief in its power, Aziz responded that "love is the water of life" (Shafak, 2010, p. 54). In fact, although they held opposing views regarding love and other issues, this email conversation as well as the whole work that Elif penned do not imply that one view is superior and valid than the other. As the narrative layers unveil, as much as love helped Ella and Rumi, it ended the life of Kimya and distressed Jeannette. Hence, displaying a multiplicity of views in the novel was not employed for the sake of privileging a specific party. Rather, it has been exhibited only to show that reality is not actually mono-sided; it can be multifaceted and it can be plural.

3.5.2.2. Heteroglossia and Hybrid Diction

The Forty Rules of Love is a polyphonic novel, where multiple voices engaged in dialogic interactions and conversations. It is also a work in which characters came from different backgrounds, different centuries, and different geographical places. Therefore, the presence of what Mikhail Bakhtin labelled heteroglossia was inevitable.

In fact, Elif's text included spiritual and religious contents. Parts of the novel tackled Sufism, at times being an offshoot in the Islamic tree, at other times an alternative for it; but mostly, Sufism was considered as an ignored beautiful corner inside the Islamic shelter. In fact, dealing with Sufism as a special corner has created an intra-faith pluralism, the thing that traced a bold line between Sufis and non-Sufis. While Sufis were featured as tolerant and peaceful, part of the non-Sufis were considered as fanatics. As a result, Sufis' speech was marked by the use of a sympathetic language and vocabulary. Nevertheless, the speech of some non-Sufis, like Baybars and his uncle, was pejorative.

By and large, Arabic terms were used, and that was due to the Islam-related spirituality which characterized the overall narrative. Such background made it inevitable to use Arabic, being the language of the religion's holy book. *Tasbih, faqih, faqir, lokum, madrassa, nafs, qibla*, were all words from the Arabic language. Titles of books remained untranslated, like *Qur'an* as well as *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (*The Incoherence of the Incoherence*), a book by the great Muslim philosopher Averroës. Names of God were also inserted in Elif's narrative, usually followed by their English equivalents, or comments upon them. Instances are: "al-Hayy—the Ever-Living","al-Wadud. All-Praiseworthy", al-Kayyum, al-Rahman, al-Rahim" (Shafak, 2010, p. 180-181). The narrative, being written by an originally Turkish writer, made it unescapable to utilize Turkish words. *Semazenbashi*, which stands for a dance master, and *kudum*, which stands for a musical instrument known as *rebab* in Arabic, are Turkish instances in the novel. Due to the extensive presence of such non-English words, and knowing

that she was also addressing Western readers, Shafak has inserted a glossary at the very end of her novel, in which she explained the non-English terms, unfamiliar to 'non-Easterners'.

3.5.2.3. Polyphonic Insertion

Through the presence of multiple voices telling the same story, each based on what the angle which he/she was confined in allowed him/her to see, polyphony was part and parcel in Shafak's embedded story. Such narrative technique gave access to characters' worlds, feelings and thoughts, regarding multiple scenes and throughout many plots. On the other side, it drew a bold line between two distinctive intra-faith streams, Sufism and non-Sufi sects, emphasising "Sufism's ostracism withing the traditional Muslim community" (Seblini, 2021, p. 01). While the former was presented as "responsive to inclusion with the West" (ibid), the latter were presented as "Islamic voices cut out of the same cloth of fundamentalism, sanctioning phobia against Muslims who are not followers of Sufism" (ibid), and unable to fit into the Western chest.

October 17th in 1244's Konya, was a date in which one of Rumi's ceremonies upon 'suffering' took place in a mosque. Important it was, that the day has been recorded and remembered by four main characters, Desert Rose, Shams of Tabriz, Hassan the Beggar and Suleiman the Drunk. Each in his/ her own section, at times in multiple individual sections, each of the characters sketched the day and the details they witnessed inside the mosque and outside of it. Shafak's inclusion of such narrative technique is to a great extent similar to Dostoevsky's employment of polyphony in his works, in terms of the role it occupied. Using the same method, the narrative allowed offering an in-depth description of characters' feelings and attitudes throughout the consecutive scenes of that Friday.

October the seventeenth has actually unveiled that a piece of land over one planet can hold multiple worlds. Inside the mosque, things were serene and peaceful, and everybody seemed to be in harmony absorbing the beauty of Rumi's words, including a disguised harlot

and a miserable-looking beggar. As soon as the narrative moved forward, the beggar left and the harlot was kicked-out. Outside of the mosque, things were rambunctious. A beggar was complaining, the prostitute was running, a gang of men were shouting, and a drunkard was bleeding. As far as each character's section unfolds, readers' ability to conjoin tabs enables them to have the narrative puzzle clear and complete.

Hasan the beggar headed towards the mosque once he heard that Rumi was about to preach there. In fact, that was not with the intention to enjoy Jalal's words, he revealed; rather, he went there because in similar ceremonies, panhandlers like him usually enjoy a good deal of alms. However, as soon as Rumi started preaching about 'suffering', Hasan decided to leave. Through Hasan's section, Rumi was being evaluated from the point of view of people who seem to have suffered more than he did. To Hasan, Rumi knew nothing about being an 'outcast', and therefore he had no right to peacefully speak about things he did not even experience.

Through Desert Rose's section, the narrative unveils her anxiety and fear from being discovered amidst the crowdy sermon of Jalal. As soon as the preacher started speaking, the harlot expressed the way she was consumed by Rumi's words sipping the peace that she never tasted in the brothel, a peace that stroke images of the soothing sight her mother inside of her head. In the same section, the way that Desert traversed to enter the world of prostitution was delineated, along with the hardships she endured to end up in the sermon, endeavouring to knock on God's door.

The novel, then, takes readers out of the mosque through another section of Hasan, with the same date. In this section, Hasan spoke about his meeting with Shams, pointing out to the point that it had been a long time since someone talked to him. The very short conversation that Hasan had with Shams seemed to have uplifted him more than the speech of the preacher who, according to the beggar, was speaking about things he only watched from periphery. In

the same section, readers can know that the harlot was recognized, kicked out, and that a bundle of men, led by Baybars, were hurrying after her to give her the right punishment that should be given to those who commit greatly wrong religious deeds. Shams, however, shooed them away, saving the beautiful woman who kept running with no turning back.

In another section of Desert Rose, more details about the way in which she was discovered in the mosque were revealed. There, she emphasized that it was Baybars who first noticed her, unveiling the dialogic exchange throughout which he insulted her, when she could only beg for mercy. In fact, besides giving more details about Baybars, and a detailed description of that scene, the same section allows accessing Rose's exact feelings and thoughts before, during, and after she was discovered, using the technique of 'stream of consciousness'. Tranquillity, perplexity, heart-racing, dejection, and listlessness were all feelings that Desert Rose experienced. Upon meeting her saver Shams of Tabriz, however, a feeling of delight and gratefulness filled her heart.

Things in the world outside the mosque on that same Friday were further described by Suleiman the Drunk as well. In fact, Suleiman has first taken the narrative into another world, serene in outrage, where other people were gathered for celebration; yet the gathering in this world was not over a religious subject in a religious place. Rather, it was over alcoholic drinks inside of a tavern. From a window, Suleiman described the crowed that was heading towards the mosque, then, he returned to the inside. In the same town, on the same day, besides holding different worlds, Konya held two opposite types of celebrations, one for those who claim to be lovers of God, and another one for lovers of wine.

In Shams' section of the same day, the dervish has also described things outside of the mosque. Before the harlot snuck to the mosque, Shams could tell that he "had a sense she would not be staying there much longer" (Shafak, 2010, p. 111). At night, Suleiman quarrelled

with Baybars, a scene that was unveiled in another section of Suleiman, and supported Desert Rose's earlier description of the guard, the way he happened to be to the drunkard's sight.

The multi-faceted description of October 17th allowed sketching the details of the day from the main possible angles, touching the feelings of characters, and exposing multiple consciousnesses, equally, with no preference paid to any side at the expense of the other. Such polyphonic narrative way has been already commented upon when Bakhtin criticised Dostoevsky mentioning that:

> What unfolds in his works is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather, a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, combined but not merged in the unity of the events. Dostoevsky's major heroes are, by the very nature of his creative design, not only objects of authorial discourse but also subjects of their own directly signifying discourse" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 6-7).

Shams' death was another incident which has been pictured through the eye of the murderer (Jackal Head), the murdered (Shams), a participant in the murdering-act, and the bereaved (Rumi). In the beginning of the novel, the killer had his own section in which he spoke about the murdering plan which happened four years before the moment in which he was speaking. The murderer first gave glimpses about his identity when he mentioned his working place (the brothel). He, then, connected the dots that led him to do the crime. From this, readers could comprehend that it was a group of people who planned for the whole murdering act, that this group is from the murdered' s circle, and that the murderer has been both threatened -in case of refusal to fulfil the killing mission- and promised to be rewarded -in case the mission ends up being fulfilled-.

In the same section, the killer talked about the meeting that gathered him and the two young men who were sending him to kill, inside of a tavern; it was at this level that he revealed his name. Jackal head, then, recounted that, like a curse, the image of the murdered

dervish could not quit his memory, expressing his inability to forsake that the dead body did not make a splash once he fell into the water inside the well into which he was thrown. It is worth mentioning that the killer referred to a drunkard who was sitting in a table, next to the one he chose for the afore mentioned 'meeting'. It was until the last pages of the novel, in the drunkard's section, that it has been revealed that this man was Suleiman, and that he has heard the whole plan and rushed to pre-inform Shams.

In another section of the killer, more details about the assassination were revealed. The killer-killed conversation prior to the fulfilment of the killing-act, its failure at the beginning, the hesitation of the killer, the engagement of six people into a battle with Shams, and then the way the killer went back to finally put an end to the targeted victim, were all unfolded. Describing his crime, the killer said, "I stabbed him [Shams] in the heart. A single hoarse cry came out of his mouth, his voice breaking at its peak. He didn't stir again, nor did he breathe" (p. 334). He, then, mentioned that he lifted the dead body of the victim with the help of the six men who witnessed the murder, together they all threw it in a near well, and they fled once they heard Rumi. Hidden and perplexed about not hearing the sound that Shams' body was supposed to make once in touch with water, he remained there and could describe Rumi's primary reaction to the assassination of his beloved companion, from his own perspective. In this vein, the killer said "He leaned forward, peered down, and stood like that for a moment, his eyes adjusting to the semidarkness inside the well. Then he pulled back, fell to his knees, pounded his chest, and let out a terrifying scream. 'They killed him! They killed my Shams!' " (p. 335). Four years after the crime, the killer still had nightmares about the soundless way throughout which Shams' body penetrated water.

In Aladdin's section, the gang that planned for Shams' assassination was revealed. It was a six men group, which included Aladdin, Irshad, and Baybars. Aladdin revealed that he also was one of the two men who met Jackal Head in the tavern, that he was among the six

men who attended the assassination from behind the wall, and that it was him who provided the killer with information about the best available place in which Shams could be killed. However, Aladdin revealed that he was not among those who quarrelled with Shams before the interference of Jackal head to make official his life's ending.

Throughout a vision that he recurrently saw, Shams was also able to share some details regarding his own assassination. In fact, what Shams narrated were glimpses of what happened once he was inside the well, after being killed. The weather, the setting, the water on which his body was floating, and even the cries of the man who came to look for him to sadly discover his death, they were all described. Speaking about his vision, Shams said:

> There was a big house with a courtyard full of yellow roses in bloom and in the middle of the courtyard a well with the coolest water in the world. It was a serene, late-autumn night with a full moon in the sky. A few nocturnal animals hooted and howled in the background … deep down at the bottom of the well, he caught sight of my hand floating aimlessly on the rippling water like a rickety raft after a heavy storm. Next, he [a middle-aged man (Rumi)] recognized a pair of eyes—two shiny black stones, staring up at the full moon now coming out from behind thick, dark clouds. My eyes were fixed on the moon as if waiting for an explanation from the skies for my murder. The man fell on his knees, crying and pounding his chest. "They killed him! They killed my Shams!" he yelled (Shafak, 2010, p. 28).

The post-crime-scene was delineated through Rumi as well. In his turn, Rumi has also seen a vision throughout which he could pre-observe what was going to happen to his companion, and his feelings of agony after that the crime was accomplished. From Rumi's own point of view, the same scene was described as such,

> I approached the well and peered down at the dark waters churning below. At first, I couldn't see anything, but in a little while the moon showered me in its glittering light and the courtyard acquired a rare luminosity. Only then did I notice a pair of black eyes staring up at me with unprecedented sorrow from the bottom of the well. "They killed him!" somebody shouted. Perhaps it was me. Perhaps this was what my own voice would sound like in a state of infinite agony (ibid, p. 98).

Such polyphonic description of the death scene and its surrounding details helped offering a full-pictured narration of the assassination. Prior-plans, the assassination's setting, as well as the attendees who witnessed its fulfilment have all been delineated. Besides that, this narrative device enabled readers to delve into the inner worlds of characters via the projection of their different thoughts, as well as the variant feelings that the killer, the killed, and the bereaved experienced.

Polyphony was also employed in multiple other scenes. Kimia's visit to Desert Rose for the purpose of learning how to seduce Shams was also delineated from two different corners, that of Kimia and that of Desert Rose. Both corners have actually displayed Kimia's inner and outer states. From Kimia, readers take grasp of the thoughts and intentions of the young woman, while from Desert Rose's part, they manage to capture the way her state appeared to an observer. Hence, polyphony allowed depicting a character, at a specific plot point from the story, inside-out. Another place where polyphony was employed was at the introduction of the *sema* dance where the ruler was scorned. The utility of polyphony in this scene revealed the different reactions to Shams' behaviour, that of Aladdin, Sultan Walad, and Hassan the beggar. Shams, per se, had his space to bring an explanation of what he did to the narrative table.

3.5.2.4. Sketching Pluralism through Polyphonic-Dialogism

As a consequence to all the previously mentioned corners that have been exposed, thanks to polyphony, another issue flew to the surface due to the use of this same narratological device along with dialogism; it is that of 'intra-faith pluralism'. In fact, displaying detailed descriptions of characters' feelings and thoughts through polyphony and dialogism in one work makes it polyphonic and dialogical at the same time. Polyphonic-dialogism, hence, is the resulting term for merging dialogism and polyphony in the same literary creation.

At times dialogism and polyphony were used together in the same scene. The embedded story unveiled that Shams paid a visit to Sheikh Yassin in two sections, that of the Zealot himself and that of Husam the Student. In the two sections, a dialogic conversation took place two times, once in the zealot's section and another time in Husam's part. Being a witness in the scene, Husam only recorded what he heard, both ways, using direct and reported speeches. However, the zealot was part of the conversation, and thus, he also reported what was going on in his mind once he saw Shams, his absorption in thoughts, as well as his hesitation to greet the dervish. Likewise, part of Desert Rose's conversation with Kimya upon seducing the latter's husband was also reported two times, from Kimya's perspective and then from Desert Rose's side. Such type of scenes, delineated from two perspectives with the insertion of dialogism both at the same time, form what is known as polyphonic-dialogism based on Bakhtin's research in the area of narratological polyvocality.

In fact, Elif's use of both devices -together or separately- in her narrative also unveiled the different types of people that one social spot can include. Inside one social shred, people could make different utterances while speaking the same language, as they could embrace different spiritual ideologies while belonging to the same religion. Baybars and his fanatic fellows, like Shams and Rumi, like Suleiman and Hasan, they were all basically Muslims. However, their spiritual understanding of this religion, their commitment-extent, as well as their application and performance of it, differed.

While Shams and Rumi were tolerant, merciful and modest, Baybars and his uncle were extremist fanatics, arrogant to those who suffered from social illnesses like prostitution, begging, and drinking alcohol. This has created a distinction between two sects under the same religious umbrella. That of zealots and extremists (non-Sufis), and that of Sufi-Muslims (Sufis). While the former showed no possibility of integration in the West, the latter was

pictured as the only amicable Islamic ideology, able to fit into a featured, or non-Muslim, community.

Overall, in comparison with orthodox Muslims, Sufism formed a minority in the narrative; there was only Aziz in the frame, and uniquely Shams in the framed, as main characters. Thus, while Sufism was mono-voiced, non-Sufi sects were poly-voiced. This has exhibited Sufism as a mere exceptional minority trying to co-exist with the vast majority of fanatics in an Eastern space. Consequently, such portrayal tells how hard -even more- would it be for any one from a different background to mingle with such society whose majority are not open to diversity and cultural differences. Furthermore, those mono-voiced Sufis condemning the non-Sufis for extremism, sexism, and fanaticism, were instrumental in increasing hatred against non-Sufi Muslims, who actually form the majority of the Oriental community. In this vein, Seblini goes further by considering that such binary opposition that Elif created through polyphony and dialogism only participated in the legitimization of "Islamophobia by normalizing hatred for non-Sufi interpretations of Islam" (2021, p. 02).

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter included four main parts. First, it started with the presentation of the most striking lineaments making up the stories in *The Forty Rules of Love,* paving the ground for them to be put under the postmodern loop. Initially, an abridgement of the frame narrative was presented. Following that, the embedded story was delineated. At that level, it has been clarified that Elif inserted fictional characters and incidents while speaking about a veridic companionship and real historical figures. Such technique, blending history with fiction, was in a later part introduced as a case of historiographic-metafiction, a postmodern narratological genre.

Then, the chapter moved on to speak about the cultural appropriation that shaped the Sufism that Elif Shafak introduced. Such modification appeared throughout the way Sufis and

the Sufi ideology were defined, via the notions as well as the forty maxims that were presented as the pillars over which Sufism stands, and also by means of introduction of (mis)translated poems that were coined to Rumi. In fact, a close scrutinization of such maxims and poems revealed the impossibility of them to truly be part of the Sufi ideology that a committed Muslim like Rumi adopted. Rather, it appeared that they were only shaped in accordance with the American culture. Elif did not claim to have introduced faithful versions of Sufism. Rather, she admitted that she introduced some changes to Sufi figures for the purpose of allowing the work to go universal. Still, however, her ideology is considered as a Sufi one. The Turkish writer also used a multiplicity of voices to draw a bold frontier between fanaticism and Sufism.

Actually, Elif succeeded in reaching the Western audience and accessing the literary market there. Nevertheless, the same techniques and content which paved the way for her to realize that, caused her narrative to end up creating a binary of opposing ideologies in the same culture. Such intra-faith pluralism presented Sufis as good, while it condemned non-Sufis to be bad, or less tolerant than Sufis. This conclusion has been emphasized through the use of what Bakhtin called ‘dialogism’ and ‘heteroglossia’, as well as other postmodern features along the two orbits over which both of the stories took place. Eventually, the novel ended up not only full of multiple voices, but also it was full of linguistic, ideological, cultural, and even literary pluralities as well, all delineating and serving a detailed and multi-faceted presentation of notions, events, and characters.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The Postmodern Era was an eon which witnessed the appearance of new literary genres and narrative trends. Historiographic metafiction, one of the creations of postmodernism, occupied a special room within the literary cocoon since that time, because of its ability to pour subjective reality into imagination. This blending helped enlarging the number of readers of history as it delivers historical notions through the medium of metafiction.

The Forty Rules of Love has indeed incarnated postmodernism in every aspect. First, the chest of the work was made of historical bones. Characters as well as events from history were part and parcel in the knitting process of the story. Rumi and Shams of Tabriz are real figures that once had a hand in chiselling the history of Sufism. Besides their presence, history was marked in the novel through the moments of reminiscence throughout which fictional persona spoke about more historical figures and incidents, like those of Seljuk, Genghis Khan, and Mongols and the genocides and wars they run over innocent heads and lands. Regarding this, the lives of Baybars and Desert Rose were instrumental.

The path that Desert Rose took was not actually the path she chose for herself. Her presence in the brothel as well as her profession as a prostitute were due to her being a war-victim. Life changed for the harlot during the wartime, as much as it changed for the innkeeper whose tavern gathered the good and the bad, the heretic and the fanatic, the innocent and the killer, just like the mosque in which Rumi was preaching on an October 17th. Likewise, Baybars' harshness was also, in a way or another, a war-resulting-trait. Those historical insertions were, in fact, part of the nested layer. The latter was unfolded in the form of a fictional novel that a fictional author penned. This was a way, that Elif chose, to point out to the fictional nature of her story, via the creation of a fictional character to implicitly announce this. As a matter of fact, the novel can firmly be classified as a historiographic metafictional one.

The embedded story and the embedding one are conjoined via intertextual threads. Ella quoted Rumi and used Shams' rules when arguing with her husband, for example. That is to say, layers in *The Forty Rules of Love* do not form separate strata, divided in setting, characters and context. Rather, the context, although performed by different characters, from different times and places, is actually one. It is all about finding purpose for one's own life, and finding what/who would fill the void in one's own soul. Such a thing, based on the story, would not be fulfilled, unless people start looking for change and taking what Kierkegaard labelled as 'a leap of faith'. Notions like these refer to postmodern existentialism, which, unlike other existential waves, recognized the existence of God.

Forsooth, taking a leap of faith does not require the doer to belong to a specific ideology. Ella was a non -religious Jew (more of an atheist), Desert Rose was Christian, and Rumi was a devoted Muslim. The presence of such variety of religious backgrounds is an incarnation of religious deconstruction and relativism that the postmodern age also witnessed.

The postmodern society of media, pop culture, techno-culture, and hyperreality was also part of the narrative. Many instances for this were provided in the analytical chapter. The embedding layer, more precisely included such elements. Chiefly, the email-exchange between Aziz and Ella was fulfilled via technological instruments like internet and laptop. Such technological instruments and advancements linked distant people. However, the culture they created caused those same people to suffer from alienation and paranoia, the thing that led to considering their world dystopian. Although they were gathered under the same roof, the Rubinsteins were shattered. Not only shattering was psychological in the postmodern age, but also it was reflected in the narratological structure as well. Instead of unfolding events over a linear path, narration was conducted through distorted directions. Time was disrupted. It moved in spirals in *The Forty Rules of Love*, going through circular moves from past to present, present to past, forward and backward.

Disruption was also cultural. Sufism and Islam were taken out of context. New Sufism was the alternative that Elif presented to bring about change in the lives of characters, to solve their problems, and to help them take a leap of faith. New Sufism, however, was only referred to as Sufism, as a universal Islamic spirituality whose adherers are the angels of society whose ultimate aim is to be of aid for peace and reconciliation. Such Sufism was laid using forty maxims denoting Neoplatonic love, and utilizing (mis)translated poems of Rumi as tools and arguments.

Elif's Sufism was, in fact, delineated via multiple voices. This polyphonic presentation of it, and of its opposing ideological streams, through multiple layering, enabled the universalization of the Sufi ideology that, Elif thought, is capable of universalism because of its ability to breathe differently in different times and places. Nevertheless, doing so, non-Sufi sects and people appeared to be opposites, and therefore, they were shown as mere fanatics and extremists. This resulted in the creation of what Seblini named as an intra-faith pluralism resulting from the aforementioned democratic narrative methodology.

Polyphony also collaborated to the detailed description along the plot-line. It actually provided a thorough description of the most important scenes in the embedded story. Furthermore, it enabled accessing the inner realms of different characters taking part in a similar sitting, knowing about their thoughts, feelings, as well as their intentions. This helped better understanding some deeds and empathizing with them, while condemning others. Delving into Desert Rose's mind and heart evokes empathy while plunging into Baybars' thoughts stresses his evilness and triggers feelings of disgust over his personality.

Multi-layering, in its turn, served the narrative process by mirroring the stories inside. In other words, the story unfolded at the embedding level was nothing but a reflection of the one in the embedded layer. Crises were the same, and so were their solutions. Therefore, one layer worked as a teaching tool for the other. Learning from past-time experiences, Ella chose

to take a leap of faith by stepping out of her conventional life. Throughout this, Aziz presence was guiding and encouraging, just like Shams was to Rumi.

The Forty Rules of Love had an important role in bringing Islamic spirituality back to the American literary market. Thus, it is considered as a mediator in the process of moving away the Islamo-phobia left by the incidents of 09/11. In point of fact, such incidents were actually the argument that proponents of Elif's ideological stream used to justify the mileage that domestication was capable of bringing to Islam. To them, Westernizing the Islamic religion was necessary to re-access the American market after the trauma that the previously mentioned event led society there to have against it.

Eventually, the writer of this research considers *The Forty Rules of Love* to be a good sample of postmodern writing in general, and of polyphonic and multi-layering insertions as well. Therefore, including it in academic curricular at English departments would be fruitful and of multiple benefits. Studying a novel like this, would be like catching multiple birds with one stone. It can be seen from different angles and it epitomizes the majority of the possible features of the postmodern school.

By the end, for further research, the writer of this thesis recommends delving into the things left less touched in this work. A detailed psychological journey inside the characters' psyches, for instance, would be a great idea to start with. Moreover, the researcher finds interesting speaking about (anti)semitism and its incarnation and reflection in the story.

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